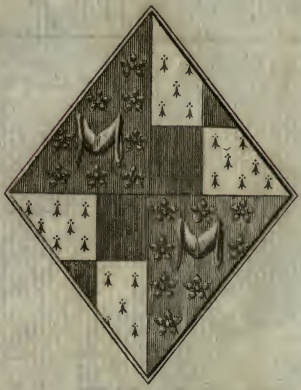

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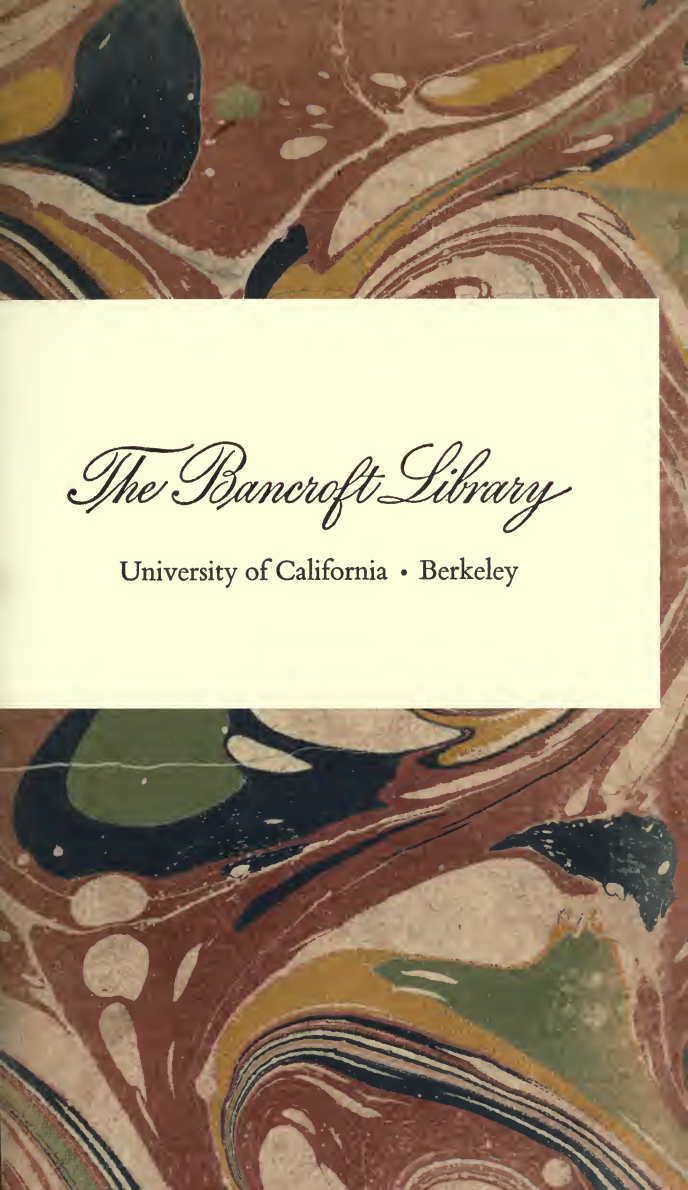
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Miſcellaneous Pieces

IN

LITERATURE, HISTORY,

AND

PHILOSOPHY.

BY MR. D'ALEMBERT,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF INSCRIPTIONS AT PARIS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

LONDON:

Printed for C. HENDERSON, at the Royal Exchange; and ſold by T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT, in the Strand. MDCCLXIV.

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AMONG the many trifling productions which are daily imported from our ingenious rivals the French, it is surprising that such an author as Mr. D'Alembert should be almost unknown in our language.

It may be a sufficient encomium upon the character of Mr. D'Alembert, to say, that he was the friend of Montesquieu when living, and the guardian of his reputation when dead: one thing, however, must be acknowledged, that no writer has united the precision of philosophy and the graces of poetry with more success.

The principles laid down in his Essay on Translation are new and ingenious; and it were to be wished, that the finest passages of the best classics were selected with the same judgment, which the author has shewn in his Extracts from Tacitus.

The pieces in this volume are more adapted to the generality of readers than the rest of the author's compositions, as they chiefly relate to history and the belles lettres.—The Memoirs of Christina, queen of Sweden, contain many interesting facts, interspersed with observations that are pertinent, spirited and concise.—The Account of the Government of Geneva would not have disgraced the pen of Tacitus or Sallust.—The Essay upon the Abuse of Criticism on Religion is perhaps the best and most candid defence of philosophy, and philosophers, that has yet been published.—The Piece upon Eloquence discovers to us the true foundation of the sublime, and, by resolving it solely into the genuine sentiments of the heart, strongly conceived and clearly expressed, exposes the futility of those false systems of rhetoric,

rhetoric, which would reduce eloquence to a mechanical science, when it is the gift of nature alone.—The Alliance between learned Men and the Great shews the true way of living with great men, free from servile adulation or cynical rusticity. None were ever better qualified than Mr. D'Alembert to treat so delicate a subject, as none ever received more distinguished marks of respect without courting them at the expence of his honour or repose: he has given the result of his observations without spleen or vanity; the consciousness of his own merit might have excused the one, and the favours he has received have tempted him to the other. Great talents are the titles and distinctions of Nature, while those conferred by princes are often capricious or venal gratuities for the prostitution of virtue and honour: the former are the inherent unalienable property of their possessors; the latter descend alike to the hero and the knave.

The editor is indebted for the translation of the Essay on Taste to Mr. Gerrard, and for that of the Government of Geneva, and the Memoirs of Christina, to another gentleman.

MISCEL-

MISCELLANIES.

REMARKS ON TRANSLATION.

THEY are not laws which I am now going to dictate. It would better become thoſe writers among us, who have engaged in tranſlation with moſt ſucceſs, to ſet themſelves up for legiſlators. But they have done better than tranſcribe rules, they have given examples. Let us learn this art from their works, and not from certain confident deciſions which are liable to diſpute. Where are the precepts that ought to be preferred to great models? the laſt always enlighten, the firſt may prove pernicious. In all kinds of literature, reaſon has laid down a few rules, caprice has multiplied them, and pedantry has forged ſhackles, which prejudice reveres, and which talents dare not break through. To which of the fine arts ſoever we caſt our eyes, we ſee every-where mediocrity dictating laws, and genius meanly ſtooping to obey them. It is a ſovereign impriſoned by his ſlaves. But if we will not ſuffer it to be ſubjugated, neither ſhould we ſuffer it to range without controul.

This rule, ſo uſeful to the progreſs of learning, ſhould be extended, I think, not only to originals, but to works of imitation; among which may be ranked tranſlations.

In this eſſay we will attempt to ſhun the two extremes of rigour and indulgence, which are equally dangerous. We will examine the laws of tranſlation, with reſpect to the genius of languages; and then with reſpect to the genius of authors; and laſtly, with relation to the principles which may be laid down in this kind of writing.

It is commonly imagined, that tranſlation would be very eaſy, if all languages were formed upon one another. In that caſe, I dare ſay, there would be many indifferent tranſlators, and few excellent. The former would confine themſelves ſervilely to a literal verſion, and look no farther; the latter would aim at ſomething more, harmony, and eaſe of ſtyle; two qualities which good writers have never neglected, and which form the characteriſtic of ſome.

The tranſlator ought to have a nice diſcernment, to diſtinguiſh when a ſtrict fidelity may yield to the graces of diction, without enfeebling the ſentiment. One of the great difficulties of writing, and eſpecially of tranſlating, is to know how far energy may be ſacrificed to nobleneſs, correctneſs to eaſe, and a rigorous juſtneſs to the mechaniſm of ſtyle. Reaſon is a ſevere judge, whom we ought to fear. The ear, a haughty one, that muſt be uſed with addreſs. It ought not to be laid down as a rule to tranſlate literally, even in paſſages where the genius of the languages corre-

ſponds,

ſponds, if the tranſlation would be dry, harſh, and inharmonious.

However, the difference of the characters of languages, ſcarcely ever permitting a literal verſion, ſaves the tranſlator this difficulty, from the neceſſity it lays him under of ſacrificing either agreement to preciſion, or preciſion to agreement. But the impoſſibility of rendering the original word for word, leaves him a dangerous liberty; for, as he cannot give his copy a perfect reſemblance, there is reaſon to fear he will not give it ſuch a one as it may have.

Beſides, as the niceties of our own language * require ſo much ſtudy to be well underſtood, how much more is neceſſary to unravel the niceties of a foreign language; and what is a tranſlator without this double knowledge?

The tranſlators of the antients think themſelves the leaſt intereſted in this remark. If the niceties of diction eſcape them in the original, they eſcape their readers too; and yet, by an unaccountable fate, they are treated with more ſeverity than any other of their profeſſion. A kind of ſuperſtition in favour of antiquity diſpoſes us to imagine, that the antients always expreſſed themſelves in the happieſt manner. Our ignorance turns to the advantage of the original, and the prejudice of the copy. The tranſlator always appears to come ſhort, not of the idea the original gives us of himſelf, but of that which we have of him; and, to render the abſurdity complete, we admire at the ſame time that mob of modern La-

* The French language.

tiniſts, moſt of whom, being inſipid in their own language, impoſe upon us in a dead one; ſo true is it with reſpect to languages, as well as authors, that whatever is dead has a title to our homage.

But is it true, ſome perhaps will ſay, that languages have a different character? We are not ignorant, that ſome modern literati, who pique themſelves upon a philoſophical ſpirit, and who have given proofs of it ſometimes, have maintained a contrary opinion; an abſurdity which, according to cuſtom, has been charged upon the philoſophical ſpirit, but which it never dictated.

In the hands of a man of genius every language is adapted to all ſtyles. It will be either light or pathetic, neat or ſublime, according to the ſubject and the writer. In this ſenſe languages have not a diſtinguiſhing character; but, if they are all equally proper for the ſame kind of work, they are not equally fit to expreſs the ſame idea. It is this in which the diverſity of their genius conſiſts.

Languages, in conſequence of this diverſity, muſt have their mutual advantages over one another. But their advantage, in general, will be great, in proportion to their variety of turns, brevity of conſtruction, licence, and richneſs. This richneſs does not conſiſt in a power of expreſſing the ſame idea in a barren abundance of ſynonimous terms, but every ſhade of an idea in different terms.

Of all languages cultivated by men of letters, the Italian is the moſt variegated, the moſt flexible, and

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the moſt capable of the different forms we may want to give it. It is not leſs rich in good tranſlations, than excellent in vocal muſic, which is a ſpecies of tranſlation. On the other hand, our language is the moſt ſevere in its laws, the moſt uniform in its conſtruction, the moſt contracted in its career. Can we wonder then that it ſhould be the rock of tranſlators, as it is alſo of poets? But what ſhould be the reſult of theſe difficulties? To teach us to prize good authors, as they are incapable of giving us mean productions.

If languages have their genius, authors likewiſe have theirs. The character of the original ought to be transferred to the copy. This is a rule which ought to be the more recommended, as it is practiſed the leaſt; and as readers are moſt apt to diſpenſe with the obſervation of it.

How many tranſlations are there which, like regular beauties, without ſoul, without phyſiognomy, repreſent in the ſame manner works of the moſt unequal compoſition? This is, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, a kind of wrong ſenſe, which does the moſt harm to a tranſlation. Others are haſty, and amend themſelves; but theſe are endleſs and incorrigible. The blemiſhes, which may be removed by cancelling them, do not deſerve the name. It is not the faults, it is the coldneſs, which murders compoſitions; and they are almoſt always more blameable for the things which are not there, than for thoſe which the author has inſerted.

It is the more difficult to do full juſtice to an original in a tranſlation, as it is ſo eaſy to miſtake his ſtrokes, and to ſee him only in one point of view. A writer, for example, ſhall poſſeſs two properties in his ſtyle, conciſeneſs and vivacity, which are not neceſſarily united, as brevity is often found with coldneſs and inſipidity. Yet a tranſlator, in imitating him, ſhall be contented with aiming at conciſeneſs, without being lively; and thus the moſt beautiful part of the reſemblance is wanting.

But, indeed, how ſhould we put on the air of a ſtranger, if we are not fitted for it by nature. Men of genius ought to be tranſlated only by thoſe who reſemble them; and who, while they imitate them, are capable of being their rivals. A painter, of moderate merit in original drawing, may be a good copyiſt; but for this a ſervile imitation is all that is neceſſary. The tranſlator copies with colours which are peculiar to him.

The character of writers is diſtinguiſhed either by their thoughts, or ſtyle, or both. Thoſe who excel in thoughts, loſe the leaſt in paſſing from one language to another. Corneille would be eaſier tranſlated than Racine; and (what may ſeem a paradox) Tacitus than Salluſt. Salluſt, having ſaid every-thing, requires a tranſlation that ſcarce preſerves him. Tacitus, leaving much underſtood, and making his reader think, requires a tranſlation only to loſe nothing.

Writers, who join a refinement of ideas with that of ſtyle, afford more advantages to a tranſlator, than thoſe whoſe agreeableneſs is in their ſtyle only. In the

the first case, one may flatter one's self with being able to transfer to the copy the character of the thought; and, consequently, at least part of the spirit of the author. In the second place, if we do not render the diction, we do nothing.

Of the last class of authors, so peculiarly unfavourable for translation, the least stubborn are those whose principal quality is to handle their language elegantly; the most intractable are those whose manner of writing is peculiar to themselves.

The English have translated some of Racine's tragedies well: I doubt whether they would translate, with the same success, Fontaine's fables, the most original work perhaps in the French language; or Aminte, a pastoral full of those details of gallantry and agreeable stories, which the Italian language is so well formed to express, and which it must be left in the intire possession of; or, in short, the letters of madam de Sevigne, so frivolous as to their subject, and so seducing by their negligence of style. Some foreigners have mistaken them, not being able to translate them. Indeed nothing cuts short so many difficulties as misapprehension.

It has been asked, whether poets may be translated into verse, especially in our language, which does not admit of blank verse like the English and Italian, and which will not excuse the want of rhime, either in the translator or the poet. Many of our writers, from a passion for difficulty, or poetry, have pretended, that it is impossible to give a prose version of poets, without disfiguring them, and spoiling their

principal charms, the meaſure and harmony. It remains to inquire, whether rendering them into verſe is not, properly ſpeaking, imitating, and not tranſlating them. The ſingle article of the different harmony of the two languages raiſes an inſurmountable bar againſt tranſlations in verſe. Can it be imagined, that our poetry, with its rhimes, its hemiſticks always alike, the uniformity of its courſe, and, if I durſt ſay it, its monotony, can repreſent the varied cadence of the Greek and Roman poeſy? and yet the difference of harmony is the leaſt obſtacle. Aſk ſome of our beſt poets, who tranſplanted into our language ſome of the fineſt paſſages in Homer and Virgil, how many times they have been forced to ſubſtitute, in the room of ideas they could not render, ideas of equal dignity taken from their own fund, to ſupply imagery by ſentiment; energy of expreſſion, by vivacity of turn; pomp of harmony, by ſtrength of thought? Thoſe fine verſes of Virgil upon ſuicides are well known,

Qui ſibi letum
Inſontes peperere manu lucemque peroſi,
Projecere animas.

They deteſt the light, and fling away their lives.

The timid genius of our language will not allow this image, though ſo noble and animating; in the room of which one of our great poets has ſubſtituted theſe pretty verſes;

Ils

Ils non pu ſupporter foibles et furieux,
Le fardeau de la vie impoſe par les dieux.

Furious and weak they ſink beneath the weight
Of life's ſad burthen by the gods impoſed.

Perhaps it would be difficult to decide the merit of theſe two poets; but it is eaſy to ſee, that the French verſes are no tranſlation of the Latin. To tranſlate poetry into proſe, is to turn a meaſured air into recitative: To tranſlate it into verſe, is to change one meaſured air into another, which is not inferior to it, yet not the ſame. The firſt a good copy, but feeble; the ſecond is a work upon the ſame ſubject, rather than a copy. But how ſhall we be able to do juſtice to poets who have written in a foreign language? We muſt learn it.

To bring theſe reflections to a concluſion. If the greatneſs of the difficulty conſtitutes the principal merit, then he who tranſlates has more merit than he who creates.

In men of genius ideas are born without pains, and the expreſſion moſt adapted to them ſprings up along with them; to expreſs in our own manner, ideas which are not our own, is almoſt intirely the work of art, and this art is the more perfect as it is the leſs diſcovered; but, let it be ever ſo well conceal'd, we know that it exiſts; and for this reaſon we prefer originals to works of imitation. Nature will not loſe her claim upon us. The productions at which ſhe alone preſides, are thoſe which

ſtrike us the moſt. Thus fruits in their natural ſoil, raiſed with ordinary culture, and moderate care, are preferred to exotics, which are forced under the ſame ſun with much pains and induſtry. We may taſte the laſt, but we have recourſe always to the firſt.

However, while we aſſign to creative writers the firſt rank, which they deſerve, it is but juſt to place good tranſlators next to them, above thoſe who have wrote perhaps as well as poſſible without genius. But there is a kind of fatality attached to thoſe arts, which conſiſt in altering the dreſs of a ſtrange perſonage. There are thoſe whom we degrade by the moſt unjuſt prejudice. There are thoſe to whoſe merit we do not do ſufficient juſtice, and the tranſlator is certainly among that number.

This is not the only injuſtice which renders their work ſo ungrateful, and their number ſo ſmall; for, though they find ſufficient difficulties which they cannot ſurmount, yet we take a pleaſure in rivetting their chains, as if it was for the ſake of being a bar to their encouragement, and to our own intereſt.

The firſt hardſhip we impoſe on them, or rather which they incur themſelves, is, to reſt content with being the copyiſts, inſtead of the rivals, of the authors they tranſlate: Superſtitiouſly devoted to their originals, they look upon it as ſacrilege, to dare to embelliſh even paſſages that are feeble; they dare not be ſuperiors, and will not be at the pains to ſucceed.

It is juſt as if an able engraver, in copying the drawing of a great maſter, ſhould forbid himſelf any

fine

fine and delicate touches to hide its faults, or diſtinguiſh its beauties.

Obliged, as the tranſlator is, ſo often to fall ſhort of his author, ought he not to be above him when he can?

It may be objected, that ſuch liberty is in danger of degenerating into licentiouſneſs. But, when the original is well choſe, the occaſions for amendment or embelliſhment will occur very rarely; if they are frequent, it is not worth tranſlating.

A ſecond obſtacle, which tranſlators have made for themſelves, is that timidity which ſtops them, when with courage they dare ſwerve from their model. This courage conſiſts in riſking new expreſſions to do juſtice to lively and ſtrong paſſages in the original. Theſe liberties ought to be uſed with ſobriety, they ought to be neceſſary; but when does that happen? Is it in all caſes where the difficulty of tranſlating ariſes from the genius of language? Each has its peculiar laws, which ought not to be violated. To ſpeak Latin in French would be a fantaſtical temerity, inſtead of a happy boldneſs. But when there is room to believe, the author has adopted an expreſſion of genius in his own language, then we may ſeek for a ſimilar one. But what is an expreſſion of genius? It is not a new word dictated by ſingularity or idleneſs, but the neceſſary and exact re-union of ſome known terms, to render a new idea with energy. This is almoſt the only innovation with which a tranſlator may be indulged.

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The moſt indiſpenſable condition of uſing new expreſſions is, that they ſhall give the reader no idea of conſtraint, though conſtraint was the occaſion of them. In converſing with ſtrangers of great fire, who ſpeak our language with eaſe and boldneſs, we find, that they think in their own language, and tranſlate into ours; and we regret, that the ſingular and forcible terms they make uſe of are not authorized by cuſtom.

The converſation of ſtrangers (ſuppoſing it to be correct) is the image of a good tranſlation. The original ought to ſpeak our language not with that ſuperſtitious timidity which is felt for a native tongue, but with that noble liberty which knows how to embelliſh one language, by borrowing peculiar ſtrokes from another. Thus the tranſlation will have every quality to render it worthy of eſteem; that eaſy and natural air, which is imprinted by the genius of the original, and, at the ſame time, that taſte of the ſoil which a foreign tincture muſt give it.

Good tranſlations are the beſt calculated for enriching language. This is the uſe I would make of them, which, in my opinion, is more proper, than what is hinted by a famous Satyriſt of the laſt age, who was as paſſionate an admirer of the antients, as he was a ſevere, and ſometimes unjuſt cenſor of the moderns. "The French, ſays he, want taſte, and "only the taſte of the antients can form it amongſt "our authors and connoiſſeurs; and good tranſla- "tions would give that valuable taſte to thoſe who "are not qualified to read the originals." If we want

want taſte, I know not where it is fled. It is not, at leaſt, the fault of the models in our language, which are inferior to the antients in no reſpects. To mention only the dead; who will dare to place Sophocles above Corneille, Euripides above Racine, Theophraſtus above Bruyere, or Phædrus above Fontaine? Let not our claſſical library conſiſt ſolely of tranſlations, nor let us exclude them. They will multiply good models; they will aſſiſt us in underſtanding the character of writers, ages, and people; they will teach us to perceive thoſe ſhades, which diſtinguiſh abſolute and univerſal taſte from national.

The third arbitrary law to which tranſlators are ſubject, is the ridiculous conſtraint of tranſlating an author from beginning to end. By this means the tranſlator, fatigued and chilled by the weak paſſages, languiſhes in the moſt excellent parts; beſides, why ſhould he be put to the torture to give an elegant turn to a falſe thought, or to be nice upon a common idea? It is not to bring the faults of the antients to light, that we tranſplant them into our language, but to enrich our learning by what is excellent among them. To tranſlate them by parcels is not to mutilate them, it is to paint them in profile, and to advantage. What entertainment can there be in a tranſlation of that part of the Æneid, where the harpies rob the Trojans of their dinner; or of thoſe cold, and ſometimes groſs pleaſantries, which diſfigure the harangues of Cicero; or of thoſe paſſages in an hiſtorian, which preſent nothing intereſting to the reader in point of matter or ſtyle? Why,

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in ſhort, ſhould we transfer into another language that which has only graces in its own, like the details of agriculture and paſtoral life, which are ſo agreeable in Virgil, and ſo inſipid in all the tranſlations which have been made of them?

Why ſhould not the wiſe rule of Horace, to neglect what we cannot ſucceed in, be as applicable to tranſlations as any other kind of writing?

Our learned men would find a conſiderable advantage, in tranſlating by parcels certain works, (which contain beauties ſufficient to make the fortune of a number of writers,) whoſe authors, if they had as much taſte as genius, would eclipſe writers of the firſt rank. What pleaſure, for inſtance, would Seneca and Lucan give thus opened and tranſlated by a maſterly hand? Seneca, ſo excellent to cite, and ſo tireſome to read ſucceſſively forward, who turns round the ſame object with a brilliant rapidity; in this reſpect different from Cicero, who always keeps advancing, though ſlowly, to his end. Lucan, the Seneca of poets, ſo full of maſculine and true beauties, but too declamatory, too monotonous, too full of maxims, and too void of images. The only writers who have a title to be tranſlated intirely, are they whoſe agreeableneſs conſiſts in their very negligence, ſuch as Plutarch in his lives of illuſtrious men, where, quitting and reſuming his ſubject every inſtant, he converſes with his reader without tiring him.

I am led by the preceding to another reflection, which, though it has not a direct relation to the preſent

ſent matter, may be uſeful. The authors we can put into the hands of youth in the courſe of ſtudy are but a ſmall number, and of them it is a ſtill ſmaller part which we can teach them to enter into and underſtand; yet their memory muſt be promiſcuouſly charged with good, indifferent, and wretched, juſt as this part happens to turn out; while the true beauties, thanks to the little taſte of the generality of maſters, are commonly the leaſt noticed. Would it not be infinitely better to ſelect, from the different works of each author, the moſt excellent paſſages, and to lay before the reader nothing of the antients, but what deſerves to be retained? Thus, they would not only become poſſeſſed of their thoughts in general, but the beſt of them; they would be acquainted with the ſtyle and genius of a great number of their writers; in ſhort, they would have the advantage of cultivating their minds, while they formed their taſte. Such a collection need not be immenſely large, if it was made with choice, and the common term of ſtudy would be long enough to render it familiar: We cannot enough recommend it to ſome able ſcholar, to undertake this work. He ought, however, to have two qualities rarely united, a profound intimacy with the antients, and a freedom from all ſuperſtition in their favour. He ought not to be like that enthuſiaſtic worſhipper of Homer, who, having undertook to mark all the fine paſſages in that great poet, had, in three readings, marked the whole from one end to the other. Could ſuch a man flatter himſelf, that he knew the true beauties of Homer,

Homer? or could Homer himſelf have been pleaſed with ſuch an admirer?

I return to my ſubject. The principles of tranſlating laid down here are ſuch as I have followed in rendering different paſſages of Tacitus. Some of them have already appeared; and as the public reliſh them, and wiſh for more, it is to oblige them that I have added a greater number, the fruits of a few moments leiſure left me, after ſix years of painful labour of a different kind. However, I am far from pretending to have extracted all that is remarkable in his works. The prejudices of a tranſlator apart, as he is beyond compariſon the greateſt hiſtorian of antiquity, ſo he furniſhes us with moſt paſſages worthy of being ſelected. Nevertheleſs, perhaps this will be ſufficient to point out the different kind of beauties of which we find models in this incomparable author, who has painted men with ſo much energy, truth, and addreſs, affecting events in ſo pathetic a manner, and virtue with ſo much ſentiment; who poſſeſſed, in ſo high a degree, the true eloquence of expreſſing great things ſimply; and who may be regarded as one of the beſt maſters of morality, by that ſad, but uſeful knowledge of men, which may be learnt from his works. He is accuſed, I know, of giving too bad a portrait of human nature, that is, of ſtudying it too well; of being obſcure, which means only, that he did not write for the multitude; of having too rapid and conciſe a ſtyle, as if it was not the greateſt merit of a writer, to ſay a great deal in a few words.

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It is impoſſible to tranſlate a great genius, unleſs it be with vivacity and enthuſiaſm; but, if he be alſo a profound writer, it requires time to ſtudy how to render him; beſides, in order to avoid all at once the coldneſs and negligence of ſome works of taſte, it ſeems neceſſary to write quick, and to correct ſlow. Convinced of theſe principles, I made this eſſay with rapidity, and I reviewed it afterwards with as much rigor and exactneſs as I was capable of.

The principal thing to which I applied myſelf, was to preſerve the preciſion, the nobleneſs, the brevity of the original, as far as might be permitted for my ſmall talents, (with the feeble aſſiſtance of a language ſo difficult to manage as ours, ſo ungrateful, ſo drawling, ſo equivocal,) to contend with ſuch a writer as Tacitus. In thoſe paſſages where it was impoſſible to be as cloſe as the original, I have broken the ſtyle to render it more lively, and to ſupply by that means, though imperfectly, that conciſeneſs I was not capable of attaining.

I have attempted, in ſhort, to render his ſpirit where I could not render his words. The pieces I have publiſhed are retouch'd in ſome places, and the object of moſt of the alterations has been, to make the alteration more forcible and conciſe, without deſtroying the ſenſe of the original, or giving any hardneſs and aridity to the ſtyle. I have reſtored the true ſenſe in two or three paſſages where I was before miſtaken. I have ſometimes departed from the ſenſe adopted by others, and ſometimes from that which has had the ſanction of a whole mob of commentators

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and tranſlators; I believe never without good reaſons. In general, where the ſenſe appeared to me diſputable or doubtful, I have always choſe the beſt, as there is always reaſon to think that is the author's. Sometimes, where it was impoſſible to give his full meaning to common readers, without a multitude of words, I have preferred leaving his beauties to the ſagacity of the intelligent reader, to annihilating them by a paraphraſe. Sometimes, indeed, I have taken the liberty to alter his ſenſe a little, when it ſeemed to preſent an image or idea that was puerile; for my juſt admiration of Tacitus does not blind my eyes to that ſmall number of paſſages, where he appears to me to fall beneath himſelf. Such, for example, in my opinion, is that part of the life of Agricola, where Tacitus oppoſes the redneſs of Domitian's countenance, to the paleneſs of the wretches whom he cauſed to be executed in his preſence, where he remarks, that this colour being natural, preſerved the face of the emperor from the impreſſion of ſhame; a trifling and frivolous circumſtance, neither worthy of the genius of the hiſtorian, nor the hateful and affecting picture he gives of ſo many innocent victims, and a tyrant who could ſee them expire.

Whatever be the reſt of the plan I have laid down in this tranſlation, I ought not to expect it will be reliſhed by all the world. In this ſubject, more than any other, each reader has, if I may ſo ſpeak, his peculiar ſtandard, or, if you will, his prejudices, to which he expects a tranſlator will be conformed. Hence, nothing perhaps is more rare in literature,

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than a tranſlation generally approved. If it be liked on the whole, how many particulars are there which give a handle to criticiſm?

I ſhould think myſelf happy in obtaining the ſuffrage of a ſmall number of men of letters, who, by an intimate knowledge of the nature of the two languages, the genius of Tacitus, and the true principles of tranſlating, are capable of eſtimating the pains I have taken; with reſpect to thoſe who only believe they are, I have nothing to expect, or to demand from them.

The only favour I wiſh to receive from thoſe whom I acknowledge to be true judges is, not to confine themſelves to the diſcovery of my faults, but to offer me at the ſame time the means of correcting them. Of all the injuries tranſlators have a right to reſent, many of which I have already remarked, the principal is the manner in which they have been accuſtomed to be cenſured. I don't ſpeak of thoſe ſilly, vague, falſe criticiſms, which deſerve no attention, I ſpeak of cenſure that is not without grounds, and equitable in appearance. Yet even this, I ſay, in ſubjects of tranſlation, is not warrantable. We may judge of a free work without reſerve, and content ourſelves with expoſing its faults in a juſt criticiſm, becauſe the author was maſter of his plan, of what he ought to ſay, and the manner of ſaying it; but the tranſlator is in a ſtate of conſtraint on all ſides; obliged to advance in a narrow and ſlippery path, not of his own chuſing, and ſometimes to throw himſelf on one ſide to eſcape a precipice; ſo that, to criticiſe

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upon him with juſtice, it is not ſufficient to ſhew he has committed a fault, he muſt be convinced, that he could have done better, or as well, without ſo doing: In vain will it be to reproach him, that his tranſlation wants a rigorous juſtneſs, if it cannot be proved, that he could preſerve this juſtneſs without ceaſing to be agreeable; in vain will it be to pretend, that he has not given the full idea of his author, unleſs it can be ſhewn, that it was poſſible, without rendering the copy feeble and languid. In vain will it be to accuſe his tranſlation of harſhneſs, if another is not ſubſtituted in its ſtead, more natural and forcible. To correct the miſtakes of an author is merit in a common critic, but is a duty in the cenſor of a tranſlation. It is not to be wondered at then, if, in this kind of writing, as in all others, good critics ſhould be as ſcarce as good compoſitions. And why ſhould it be ſo? Satyr is ſo very convenient! The generality of readers are laviſh of it to ſhew their acuteneſs. 'Tis true learning alone that gives us a ſecurity, I will not ſay for being eſteemed, but I will ſay, for being read.

DIS-

DISCOURSE BEFORE THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

MESSIEURS,

BEING engaged in abſtract ſtudies from my youth, and ſince obliged to devote myſelf to them by my adoption into a learned and celebrated ſociety, I muſt content myſelf with loving and admiring your labours. The votes you have honoured me with, are not to be imputed ſo much to my writings as to my ſentiments for you, my zeal for the glory of letters, and my attachment to thoſe, who, in imitation of your example, render them reſpectable by their talents, and their manners. Theſe are the titles which I bring here; they do me honour, and they coſt me nothing to maintain.

But, ſirs, this is ſpeaking too much of myſelf: The firſt duty, which gratitude obliges me to, is to forget myſelf, that I may attend to what you are intereſted in, and partake in that concern you now expreſs for the loſs you have ſuſtained. The biſhop of Vannes was only indebted to himſelf for the reputation and honours he enjoyed: He was a ſtranger to the ſuppleneſs of addreſs, the baſeneſs of intrigue, and all thoſe contemptible meaſures, which lift men to dignities by meanneſs. He was eloquent and virtuous, and theſe two qualities intitled him to epiſcopal honours, and your ſuffrages.

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Permit me to introduce the homage I owe to his memory, by ſome reflections upon that art for which he was diſtinguiſhed. Theſe reflections are drawn from your works, and they are ſubmitted to your judgment.

Eloquence is the talent of conveying with rapidity and force to the minds of others, thoſe ſentiments with which we ourſelves are affected. This ſublime talent has its origin in an uncommon ſenſibility of what is grand and true. The ſame diſpoſition of mind, which makes us ſuſceptible of a lively and ſingular emotion, is ſufficiently qualified to give an external repreſentation of them; ſo that there is no art in eloquence, ſince it requires nothing but to feel. It is not for the ſake of producing beauties, but avoiding faults, that the rules of great maſters have been inſtituted. Nature forms men of genius, as ſhe forms precious metals in the bowels of the earth, rough, irregular, and allayed with different matter. Art is of no more ſervice to genius than it is to metals; it adds nothing to their ſubſtance, it only ſeparates that which is foreign, and diſplays the genuine work of nature.

According to theſe principles, ſirs, which are yours, nothing can be truly eloquent, but what preſerves this character in paſſing from one language to another. The ſublime will always be tranſferred, and often the ſtyle. Why do the Cicero's and the Demoſthenes's intereſt thoſe who read them in a different language from their own, though mutilated and traveſtied? The genius of thoſe great men breathes

breathes ſtill; and, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, the print of their ſpirit cannot be effaced.

To be eloquent, without aſpiring to the glory of it, nothing more is required, than a genius elevated with great objects. Deſcartes and Newton, (pardon this example in a geometrician, who dares to ſpeak of eloquence before you) Deſcartes and Newton, thoſe two legiſlators in the art of thinking, whom I do not pretend to place in the rank of orators, are eloquent when they ſpeak of God, and Time, and Space.

Indeed, whatever elevates the mind or ſoul, is the proper ſubject of eloquence, on account of the pleaſure we feel in ſeeing ourſelves great.

On the other hand, that which annihilates us in our own eyes, is not leſs proper; and, perhaps, for the ſame reaſon: For, what is more capable of exalting us, even in humbling us, than a contraſt betwixt that ſmall ſpace we occupy in the univerſe, and that immenſe extent which our ideas dare traverſe, darting, as I may ſay, from that centre where we are placed?

Nothing then, ſirs, can be more favourable to eloquence, than the truths of religion. They ſet before us the nothingneſs and dignity of man; but the grander the ſubject is, the more does it require ſuch as are capable of treating it, and the rules of pulpit eloquence ſufficiently balance by their rigour the advantages of the object.

Almoſt every thing is dangerous in this kind. The difficulty of pronouncing in a manner affecting, yet

natural,

natural, thoſe truths whoſe importance has rendered them common; the dry and didactic form, ſo oppoſite to great movements, and great ideas; the air of forwardneſs and affectation, which diſcovers the orator to be more attentive to himſelf than the God whom he repreſents; in ſhort, the taſte for frivolous ornaments, which are an outrage to the majeſty of the ſubject. Of all the different ſtyles which profane eloquence admits, there is properly only one ſtyle which agrees with that of the pulpit. The ſublime ought always to be in the ſentiment, or the thought, and the ſimplicity in the expreſſion.

Such, gentlemen, was the eloquence of the orator, who is the object of your regret this day. He was affecting and artleſs, like religion and truth: He ſeems to have formed himſelf upon the model of thoſe ſimple and noble diſcourſes (by which one of your moſt illuſtrious members* inſpired our monarch, while young, with virtues whoſe fruits we are now reaping.)

Happy would it be for the church and the nation, if, after enjoying the eloquence of my predeceſſor ſo long, they could but collect the remains of it after his death! The reading of them would undoubtedly be to inſure their ſucceſs; but the biſhop of Vannes, from a ſentiment we cannot blame, though we do not reſpect, diſtruſted, as he uſed to ſay of himſelf, his youth and his friends. He was too intelligent not to

* M. Maſſillon, biſhop of Clermont, in his petit Careme, preached before the king during his minority.

in

be modeſt. His mind was like his eloquence, ſimple and elevated. Simplicity is the common effect of an elevation of ſentiments, becauſe ſimplicity conſiſts in appearing what one really is, and noble minds are always gainers by being known.

In ſhort, what did moſt honour to the biſhop of Vannes, was his enlightened regard for religion; he had reſpect enough for it, to wiſh to make others love it; he knew that the opinions of men are as dear as their paſſions, but leſs durable, when they are left to themſelves; that error is but too apt to reſiſt the application of violent remedies; that moderation, gentleneſs, and time, will ſubdue every thing but truth.

He was alſo very far from entertaining that blind and barbarous zeal, which ſearches for impiety where it is not; and which being leſs a friend to religion than an enemy to ſcience, and letters, inſults and injures men, whoſe conduct and writings are without reproach. Where can I, gentlemen, inveigh with more force and ſucceſs againſt this cruel injuſtice, than in a ſociety which contains all that is reſpectable in religion, great in the ſtate, and celebrated in letters. Religion owes to literature and philoſophy, the confirmation of its principles; ſovereigns, the eſtabliſhment of their rights, which are violated and diſputed in ages of ignorance; and the people, that general knowledge, which makes authority more ſweet, and obedience more faithful.

How happy are we, gentlemen, in living under a prince, both wiſe and humane, who knows how well letters are calculated to make a nation love what he

cherishes most himself, justice, truth, order and peace. Dispositions so respectable as these, in our august sovereign, ought to be as high in our estimation as those shining actions, one of which would be sufficient to immortalize his reign; the grandeur of his family augmented; two provinces conquered; and two victories gained in person; peace restored to Europe by his moderation; the nobleſſe reconciled to the defenders of their country; the school of heroes raised by the side of their asylum; the earth measured from the extremity of Africa to the Icy-Sea; the taste for agriculture and useful arts encouraged by operations most wisely combined; the most necessary part of commerce made free, and by that means subsistance afforded to twenty millions of people, who appeal to him as their father.

It belongs to us, gentlemen, (a zeal for my country authorizes me to add myself to the number) to us, I say, to answer such pure and equitable intentions of our just prince, by recommending in our writings the peaceable love of religion, and the laws. It was principally with a view to fix the manner of thinking, as well as speaking, by your works, that your illustrious founder established you. He knew all the consideration, and consequently all the authority which a man of letters might draw from his situation; Richlieu, the conqueror of Spain, of heroes and the great, amidst the homage paid him from all quarters, perceived, that if the sage honoured his great talents, the multitude only honoured his place; and that the applauses which Corneille snatched from the multitude and the philosopher, were given to the man.

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The plan and the laws which your founder prescribed to you, were the result of the idea he entertained of the dignity of your labours; he made you the most valuable and just present that a great minister could make to a society of men, (who meet together for the advancement of science) equality and liberty. By this means he prevented that spirit of ferment and intrigue, which is a slow poison to literary societies. By this means he laid up for himself that honour you have conferred upon him; that which the first members of the state derive to themselves among you, by sacrificing to learning that rank which it respects in the great, even while they stand upon it, and much more when they forget it.

Thus it was that Pompey, the conqueror of Mithridates, of Africa, and Asia, who was capable of disputing with Cæsar the empire of the world, laid down his fasces, his ambition, and his laurels at the gate of a philosopher, with whom he was going to converse, leaving it a doubt among sages, which of them upon this occasion was the greatest, the philosopher, or the conqueror.

But the most distinguished honour you have received has been the immediate protection of your sovereigns. Such a dignity is too great for any but princes; letters can only be protected honourably by kings, or by themselves: The French academy has seen at its head that prince, who was so famous in the annals of France, of Europe, and of the universe; to whose glory adversity itself contributed, greater when, for the relief of his people, he obtained peace of the na-

tions leagued againſt him, than when he compelled them to receive it; in fine when he merited of his ſubjects, of ſtrangers, and of his enemies, the honour of giving his name to the age he lived in.

Such, gentlemen, are the immortal ſubjects you are bound to celebrate; ſuch are the engagements of thoſe whom the poſſeſſion of its tenets has called to a ſeat among you. For my own part, I ſhall content myſelf with hearing and reading. You ſee my affection for my country, already known to a prince who is the ally and friend of our nation, and whoſe eulogium Europe, and his own actions, will excuſe me from making, will improve by your example. In ſhort, I ſhall learn of you what the Lacedemonian youths learnt of their maſters a reverence for the laws, a love of virtue, and an abhorrence of every baſe and unworthy action.

To conclude, gentlemen, penetrated as I am with a ſenſe of your honour, and my own duty, the ſentiments which fill my ſoul, impatient to ſhew themſelves, injure one another, and I ſhall bear an exception to that rule, that to feel is to be eloquent.

RE-

REFLECTIONS ON ELOCUTION, AND STYLE IN GENERAL.

ELoquence, the daughter of genius and liberty, owes its birth only to republics. Orators have devoted the talent of ſpeaking to the great objects of government; and as, upon theſe occaſions, it is neceſſary to convince and engage the people, eloquence is called the art of perſuading, that is, of commanding the underſtanding, and moving the paſſions at the ſame time.

Our modern writers, for the moſt part ſuperſtitious and ſervile imitators of antiquity, have adopted this definition, without recollecting, that the antients, who gave it, confined eloquence to the moſt noble and exalted purpoſes; and conſequently, this definition muſt be incomplete.

On the other hand, how many pieces of maſterly eloquence are there, which have no other end, but purely to move, and not to convince.

To think otherwiſe, is to be of the opinion of that rigid mathematician, who, after reading an admirable ſcene of madneſs in Phædrus, aſked coolly, "What does all this prove?"

The definition we have given of eloquence, contains the moſt general idea we can conceive; "It is "the talent of rapidly conveying, and forcibly im-"preſſing, that deep ſentiment with which we our-"ſelves are inſpired." This idea will ſuit with the eloquence even of ſilence, that powerful, and ſome-

times ſublime language of great paſſions; it will ſuit with the eloquence of geſture, which one may call the eloquence of the people, by the power it has to captivate the multitude, who are always ſtruck more with what they ſee, than what they underſtand: In fine, it will ſuit with that exact, calm eloquence, which confines itſelf to convince without moving, and which ſeeks to obtain our conſent, without forcing it by violence. This laſt ſpecies of eloquence is not perhaps the leaſt powerful; for we are leſs guarded againſt inſinuation than force. However, as the talent of moving conſtitutes the principal character of eloquence, it is in that point of view that we ſhall now chiefly conſider it.

The property of eloquence is not only to move, but to elevate the mind. This is the concomitant effect of that which ſeems only intended to excite tears: The pathetic and the ſublime make a deep impreſſion upon us; in finding ourſelves ſoftened, we feel a conſciouſneſs that we are greater at that time, becauſe we perceive that we are better; the ſweet and delightful penſiveneſs into which we are thrown by a diſcourſe, or an affecting repreſentation, gives us a good opinion of ourſelves, by the teſtimony it bears to our ſenſibility of ſpirit. This teſtimony is the principal ſource of the pleaſure we enjoy in love; and, in general, of all thoſe agreeable ſenſations, which accompany all tender and awful ſentiments.

We call eloquence a talent, and not an art, as moſt rhetoricians have repreſented it; for every art may be acquired by ſtudy and exerciſe, but eloquence is the

gift

gift of nature. Rules are designed to check a genius which is irregular, and not to damp that flame of genius which takes wing; their only use is to prevent those passages, which are truly eloquent, from being debased by others, where negligence or bad taste prevail. All the rules in the world could never have inspired Shakespeare's admirable soliloquy in Hamlet, though they might have saved the barbarous and disgusting scene of the grave-diggers.

We express well what we conceive well; we deliver with warmth what we feel with enthusiasm; and words as easily present themselves to paint a lively emotion, as a clear idea. The sentiment is enfeebled, is extinguished in the orator, by the cold and studied care to express it; and all that his labour amounts to, is to convince his hearers, that he does not feel himself what he wants to instil into them. "Love, "and do what you will," said one of the fathers of the church. "Feel, and say what you will," this is all the mystery of orators.

If we were to ask writers of genius about the finest passages in their works, they would acknowledge, that these cost them the least pains, because they were inspired when they produced them. Nature, disengaged from all constraint, and braving all rules, works her greatest miracles; and we experience the truth of that passage in Quintilian, "It is the soul "alone which makes us eloquent; the most ignorant, when agitated by a violent passion, are never "at a loss how to express themselves."

Such was the enthuſiaſm which once animated the peaſant of the Danube, and made him admired by the ſenate in the very ſanctuary of eloquence. It is the ſame enthuſiaſm, prompt to communicate itſelf to the hearer, which makes ſuch difference betwixt ſpoken eloquence, if I may uſe the expreſſion, and that which is written. Eloquence in books is like muſic upon paper, mute, void, and lifeleſs; it loſes its greateſt force, and it ſtands in need of action to diſplay it. It is impoſſible, without being melted, to read the affecting perorations of Cicero for Flaccus * Fonteius, Sextus Plancius, and Sylla; the moſt admirable models of eloquence which all antiquity has left us of the pathetic kind. How vaſt muſt be their effect, may we not imagine, in the lips of that great man? Let us only repreſent to ourſelves Cicero, in the midſt of the bar, animating with tears the moſt affecting diſcourſe, holding the ſon of Flaccus in his arms, preſenting him to the judges, and imploring in his behalf humanity and the laws: Can we wonder at the effect we are told of, that he was interrupted by the groans and ſobs of the auditory? Can we wonder, that ſuch a ſcene ſhould ſeduce and bias the judges? In fine, is it to be looked upon as amaſing, that the eloquence of Cicero was ſo frequently ſucceſsful in ſaving his guilty clients? The Areopagus, which was reſolved to maintain ſtrict juſtice, forbad the advocates the uſe of all eloquence. He muſt there,

* See the peroration for Flaccus; it is perhaps next to that for Milo, which was never ſpoke, the beſt in Cicero.

and

and at our tribunals, have produced other reaſons, beſides thoſe which were pathetic; and the judges of Athens, like ours, would have given moſt of thoſe cauſes againſt him, which he gained at Rome.

We muſt not only feel, to be eloquent, but we muſt not feel by halves, as we muſt not conceive by halves, if we would ſpeak with clearneſs. If you would have me weep, you muſt weep yourſelf, ſays Horace, in his admirable Art of Poetry, which may be juſtly called the code of good taſte. We muſt acknowledge, however, that if the agitation, which animates the orator when he writes, be very lively, it is not neceſſary it ſhould be always equal to what it propoſes to excite. Our minds have two principles by which they are moved, ſentiment and imagination. The firſt of theſe reſources has doubtleſs the greateſt force; but the imagination can ſometimes act a part, and yet keep its place; by its means an orator will draw tears from the audience, and ſhed them himſelf, without being really affected; by its means it is that a comedian, putting himſelf in the place of thoſe he repreſents, agitates and diſtreſſes the ſpectators with the animated recital of thoſe misfortunes he is not ſenſible of; in fine, it is by means of the imagination, that men of fine parts are capable, by their writings, of inſpiring that love of virtue, which they have not themſelves. Imagination does not ſupply the want of ſentiment by the impreſſion it makes on ourſelves, but it can ſupply it by the impulſe which it gives to others. The effect of ſentiment in us is more concentred; that of imagination is more calculated to expand itſelf abroad; the action of

the latter is more violent and ſhort; that of ſentiment is more ſtrong and conſtant.

Thus the emotion, which ought to animate an orator, ſhould compenſate, by its vehemence, what it wants in point of duration. It is not like that ſuperficial agitation which eloquence excites in cold breaſts, an impreſſion purely mechanic, produced by example, and the tone which is given to a multitude: The more genius the hearer is endued with, the more will his impreſſion reſemble that of the orator, and the more capable will he be of imitating that which he admires.

If the end of eloquence is to convey to the mind of another perſon the movements of our own breaſt, it follows, that the more ſimple a diſcourſe is upon grand ſubjects, the more eloquent it will be, becauſe it will paint the ſentiment with the greateſt truth.

I cannot tell what has induced ſo many modern writers to talk ſo much of the "eloquence of things," as if there was an eloquence of words.

Eloquence (it cannot be repeated too often) is always in the ſubject, and the nature of the ſubject; or rather of the ſentiment it produces, transfuſed into the diſcourſe. Eloquence does not conſiſt, (as ſome of the antients have ſaid, and a great many echoes have ſince repeated) in ſaying great things in a ſublime ſtyle, but in a ſimple one. It is enfeebling a great idea, to ſeek to elevate it with a pomp of words. The Pſalmiſt ſays, "The heavens declare "the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth forth "his handy-work." How ſtrangely has one of our own

own poets disfigured this sublime thought in attempting to extend and adorn it.

The heavens instruct the earth
Their author to revere,
All that the globe contains
Extols creating power:
O! what a lofty song,
A concert, O! how grand,
Of all the heavenly orbs;
What grandeur infinite!
What harmony divine
Results from their accords!

This example, perhaps, it will be said, is ill chose: The entire strophe is but indifferent, and unworthy to be compared with the original. Let us take another, whose beauty cannot be denied, the song of Ezekiah, translated by the same poet.

I've seen my pensive days
Verging to their decline,
And, at the noon of life,
I'm going just to set,
Death, spreading wide his wings,
O'erwhelms in endless shade
The light I once enjoy'd,
And in that darksome night
I seek in vain the rest
Of my departed days.

How

How admirable are theſe verſes! We cannot help tracing the poet in "the noon of life, and the ſetting "of life; the days verging to their decline, and the "wide-ſpread wings of death." Can theſe images, beautiful as they are, (but the productions of wit, which ſeeks to paint, and not of ſentiment, which ſeeks only to expreſs) be compared with the ſtriking ſimplicity of Scripture, the deep and unfeigned penſiveneſs with which the young prince repreſents himſelf at the gates of death? "I have ſaid, in the "midſt of my days I ſhall die, and I have ſought "the reſt of my years."

But further, let us compare the poet with himſelf in the ſame piece; we ſhall find, that, however beautiful be the ſtrophe we have juſt cited, we ſhall not heſitate to prefer the following for this ſingle reaſon, that the expreſſion is more natural, and leſs ſtudied.

With mournful cries and fears
My troubles ſeem to grow,
My eyes, bedew'd with tears,
Would gladly ope no more:
I tell the darkſome night,
Thou'lt overwhelm my ſoul;
I tell the ruddy morn,
That day thou gilds ſo bright
Shall be the laſt to me.

Nothing could have been more beautiful than this ſtrophe, if the original had not exceeded it in being more

more ſimple " I have ſaid I ſhall ſee my people no " more, and my eyes, weary with looking to heaven, are " cloſed."

The juſt elogium of Longinus upon that ſublime paſſage in Geneſis, is well known, " God ſaid let " there be light, and there was light;" ſome modern writers have pretended, that this paſſage, inſtead of an example of the ſublime, ſhould be mentioned as an example of ſimplicity. They look upon that to be the direct oppoſite of the ſublime, which conſtitutes its true character, " the ſimple expreſſion of a great " idea".

But let us paſs from ſacred to profane inſtances and give another example of the advantages of ſimplicity of expreſſion, to convey noble and pathetic ideas with all poſſible energy and truth; let us recollect in what manner Virgil paints Orpheus, ſolitary and penſive on the ſea-ſhore, lamenting his dear Euridice from the riſing to the departing day. A middling poet, a poet with leſs taſte, would have uſed the poetical phraſe of the riſing and the ſetting ſun; Ovid would have been glad of the opportunity, but let us hear Virgil,

Te dulcis conjux, te ſolo in littore ſecum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.

If any thing can be ſuperior to theſe admirable lines, it is the moving and real deſcription of the Jews in captivity: " By the ſtreams of Babylon we ſat, and wept when we remembered Sion".

The

The natural and ſimple ſtyle, ſays Paſcal, enchants us with reaſon; for we expected the author, and we find the man. The moſt brilliant expreſſion loſes its merit, when the attention of the mind is wearied with purſuing it: This exertion makes us think the author is poſſeſſed with himſelf, and has a mind to poſſeſs us alſo with the ſame idea; from that time his title to our approbation ſinks, and we give our conſent to him, as ſcantily and as reluctantly as poſſible. Beſides, the affectation of ſtyle injures the expreſſion of the ſentiment, and conſequently the truth of it. A writer, juſtly celebrated for his works, but a dangerous model, and deemed ſuſpicious in matters of taſte, has paſt an elogium upon this phraſe of Rochefoucaut, "my underſtanding was the dupe of my heart," meaning, "I believed my miſtreſs faithful, becauſe I wiſhed her ſo;" the laſt expreſſion is that of nature, it is the only one which would preſent itſelf to a diſtreſſed lover; the firſt is that of a wit, who never was in love, or is paſt it.

One of the ſureſt ways of judging whether a ſtyle has this ineſtimable and rare ſimplicity or no, is to place ourſelves in the circumſtances of the author; to ſuppoſe we have the ſame thought to expreſs, and to ſee if, without pains or preparation, we render it in the ſame manner.

"Unhappy Phocas! Maurice! O how happy! thou "haſt two ſons, who after thee will die; but when I'm "gone, I have not one to reign."

Could the moſt ordinary perſon in the world, who had this ſentiment to expreſs, convey it in any other terms?

terms? the only difference between a common man and a genius, is that the ſecond finds the ſentiment in his own heart, the firſt muſt have it ſuggeſted to him.

Genuine ſtrokes of eloquence are the moſt eaſily tranſlated, becauſe of the grandeur of the idea, under whatever form it is preſented; and there is no language which will not admit of a natural and ſimple expreſſion of a ſublime ſentiment.

Men, ſaid a philoſopher, have pretty near the ſame fund of thoughts, they only differ in the manner of conveying them. This maxim is both true and falſe; all men have the ſame fund of common thoughts, which the vulgar expreſs diſagreeably, and the ingenious gracefully; great ideas belong only to great geniuſes; middling ones receive them only upon credit, and the ornaments in which they appear, diſcover them to be not in their natural ſoils, but exotics, and tranſplanted.

But it may be ſaid, if eloquence, properly ſo call'd, that which moves us by great objects, has ſo little need of the rules of elocution; if it requires only to follow the expreſſion which is dictated by nature; why have the antients given us ſo many treatiſes upon the rules of elocution? This queſtion deſerves to be examined deeply.

Eloquence, properly ſpeaking, conſiſts only in lively and rapid ſtrokes; its effect is to move violently, and all the emotion dies in a ſhort time; ſo that it is impoſſible that eloquence ſhould reign in long diſcourſes, except by intervals; the darkneſs and light muſt alternately prevail. But if the ſhades of a picture are neceſſary

neceſſary, they ought not to be too ſtrong: The orator and the auditor muſt both have their reſting places; but in thoſe places he muſt only breathe, not ſleep; and it is by the calm charms of elocution, that he muſt be kept in this ſweet and agreeable ſituation. Thus it is certain, whatever air of paradox it may aſſume, that the rules of elocution are only required for thoſe paſſages, which are not truly eloquent, where nature ſtands in need of art. The man of genius is in no danger of falling into a feeble and negligent ſtyle, except where he is not ſuſtained by his matter. It is then he ought to have recourſe to elocution, and intently to purſue it; when he has great things to ſay, his elocution will be what it ought to be, without pains.

The antients, if I am not miſtaken, were ſenſible of this truth, on which account they treated eloquence with ſuch detail, and for the ſame reaſon we ſhall trace its principles the more curſorily.

Elocution has two parts, which it is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh, though they are frequently confounded, diction, and ſtyle. Diction has properly no relation but to the grammatical qualities of a diſcourſe, ſuch as correctneſs, and clearneſs. Style, on the other hand, comprehends thoſe qualities of elocution, which are more particular, more difficult, and more rare, which mark the genius and talents of the writer or ſpeaker; ſuch as propriety, elevation, harmony, and eaſe. Let us go over them in order.

Though correctneſs be ſo eſſential a quality that it needs no recommendation, the orator ought not to be

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ſuch a ſlave to it, as to injure the ſpirit of his diſcourſe. A happy licentiouſneſs is to be ranked among ſmall faults; it is blameable to be incorrect, but it is a crime to be cold. When Racine ſaid, "Je t' aimois "inconſtant qu'euſſe je fait fidele!" he choſe rather to be inaccurate, than languid, and to fail in grammar, than in expreſſion.

Clearneſs, that fundamental law, neglected every day by ſo many writers, who think themſelves profound, and are only obſcure, conſiſts in avoiding not merely ambiguous conſtructions, and phraſes loaded with ideas acceſſory to the principal one, but all epigrammatic turns, the wit of which the multitude are not capable of underſtanding. I ſay the multitude, for the orator muſt not forget that it is to them he ſpeaks; it is them whom he is to move, to melt, and to perſuade. Eloquence, which is not calculated for the bulk of mankind, is no eloquence at all; but if the orator is to baniſh from his diſcourſe the epigrammatic fineſſe, which for the moſt part is nothing but the puerile and contemptible art of making things appear more ingenuous than they are, there is another kind of fineſſe, which may be allowed him, which is ſometimes neceſſary, and which ought to be diſtinguiſhed from obſcurity. Obſcurity conſiſts in preſenting to the mind an adulterated ſenſe; the fineſſe, in preſenting two ſenſes, the one obvious and ſimple, for the vulgar, and a more ornamented and poliſhed one for men of genius; and why may not an eloquent diſcourſe reſerve a few ſtrokes for thoſe, whom an orator will really have the higheſt ambition to pleaſe? It belongs

belongs to great geniuſes to judge him, and to the multitude to obey him. He ought however to be ſober and cautious in indulging this fineſſe, and to forbid himſelf the uſe of it in all ſubjects ſuſceptible of elevation or vehemence, which require a manly colouring, and bold and deep ſtrokes; refinement of expreſſion in ſuch ſubjects deſtroys all nobleneſs, and ſerves only to enervate without embelliſhing. It is in ſtyle, as it is in character; grandeur and fineſſe are incompatable. If we regard literally what has been frequently aſſerted, that clearneſs is the characteriſtic of our language, we ſhall imagine it to be the moſt favourable for an orator. But to be undeceived in this reſpect, nothing more is neceſſary than to write in French ourſelves, or to aſk thoſe who have. No language without exception is more liable to obſcurity than ours, and none requires more minute caution in the uſe of it, in order to be underſtood.

Clearneſs is the property of our language in this ſenſe only, that a French writer ought never to loſe the clearneſs of his view, becauſe it is always ready to eſcape him; it may naturally be aſked then, how a language, ſubject to this grevious fault, and itſelf timid, ſurd, and far from exuberant, ſhould have met with ſuch rare fortune all over Europe? Many cauſes have concurred to this, the grandeur France roſe to in the late reign, the ſuperiority of our good writers in point of taſte, above thoſe of other nations, and perhaps that capricious deſtiny which determines the fate of languages, as well as that of men.

Beſides

Beſides clearneſs and correctneſs, which are entirely grammatical, and have no relation to any thing but diction, there is another correctneſs equally eſſential, which belongs to ſtyle, and conſiſts in the propriety of the terms: in midling authors, their expreſſion is always beſide the idea, and the peruſal of them gives men of genius a kind of pain like that which a fine ear feels from a perſon, who ſings neither well nor ill. Propriety of terms is the diſtinctive characteriſtic of great writers; it is this which ſets their ſtyle upon a level with their ſubject; it is this quality which diſcovers the true talent of writing, and not the frivolous art of diſguiſing common ideas with falſe colours.

It is this neceſſity of uſing proper terms, that makes good verſes ſo rare, becauſe the reſtraint laid upon poetry, obliges verſifiers to content themſelves with expreſſing their thoughts feebly or imperfectly, when by good luck they happen to have any; on the other hand, thoſe who have true poetical talents, derive from this very reſtraint, a ſource of new beauties. The obligation the poet is under to ſeek for expreſſion, often leads him to thoſe which have the greateſt energy and propriety, which perhaps he would never have hit upon, if he had wrote in proſe, becauſe his pride induces him to be pleaſed with thoſe, which firſt offer themſelves to his pen. This conſtraint, and the advantage ſpringing from it, is the beſt reaſon perhaps that can be aſſigned, why our tragedies ſhould ſtill be in rhyme; but it would be worth while to enquire whether the obſervance of this law has not produced more bad verſes than good; and whether it does

does not hurt many excellent geniuſes, who, without much ſkill in poetry, may poſſeſs extraordinary talents for the ſtage.

From the propriety of terms, ariſe preciſion, elegance, and energy, according to the nature of the ſubjects treated of, or the things deſcribed: Preciſion in philoſophical, elegance in entertaining, and energy in grand or pathetic ſubjects.

Theſe qualities at the ſame time that they ſuit the ſtyle to the ſubject, give it an air of nobleneſs, eſpecially as an orator ought to ſeparate all popular ideas and low ſubjects. It is true, that the lowneſs of ideas and ſubjects is too often arbitrary; the antients allowed themſelves much more liberty than we, who, having baniſh'd all delicacy from our manners, have carried it to exceſs in our writings, and our diſcourſes. However unphiloſophical a nation may be in this reſpect, an orator, who would expect to ſucceed in it, muſt conform himſelf to its prejudices, which may be called the philoſophy of the vulgar; even genius braves them in vain, eſpecially among a light and frivolous people, who are more ſtruck with the ridiculous than the grand, who would be unmoved with a ſublime, while they would not ſuffer a popular or a trivial expreſſion to eſcape them; and who after whole pages of genius, would be implacable to a ſingle line of bad taſte.

We come now to harmony, one of the moſt indiſpenſable ornaments of an eloquent diſcourſe. To aſk if there be any harmony of ſtyle, is almoſt to enquire, whether there be any ſuch thing as muſic; and

to

to attempt to prove it, almoſt as ridiculous as to put the queſtion. Some no doubt have no ear for harmony of language, as others have none for muſical harmony; but nature, and not reaſoning, muſt help them.

The antients were extremely delicate upon this point, as we may learn from a paſſage of Cicero †, where, in deſcribing the effect of the eloquence of a tribune, who invoked the manes of a citizen againſt a ſeditious ſon, he appears more engaged with the arrangement of his words, than the idea they convey.

Cicero's attention to harmony in pathetic paſſages, is no contradiction to what we have advanced, "that "great ideas excuſe negligence of terms." We do not mean here expreſſion in itſelf, but the mechanical diſpoſition of words; the firſt is dictated by nature, the ſecond proceeds from a good ear, and the art of arranging terms in the moſt harmonious manner. An orator is like a muſician, genius may enable him to

† I was preſent, ſays Cicero, when L. Carbi, cried out in an harangue to the people, "O Marce Druſe (patrem appello) tu dicere "ſolebas ſacram, eſſe rempublicam; quicunque eam violaviſſet ab "omnibus eſſe ei pœnas perſolutas; patris dictum ſapiens temeritas "filii comprobavit".

This termination "comprobavit" adds Cicero, excited a general admiration throughout the whole aſſembly; were we to change the order of the words in this manner, "comprobavit filii teme-"ritas", it will have no effect. This will convince us, by the way, of the modeſty of our modern Latiniſts, who ſpeak Latin as ill as they write it: This example will be ſufficient to ſhew how exquiſitely ſenſible the antients were of harmony.

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ſing, but art and a good ear alone can direct in properly connecting modulated ſounds.

Though our poetry and proſe are leſs ſuſceptible of harmony than thoſe of the antients, they have notwithſtanding a certain kind of melody which is peculiar to them. Perhaps our proſe has one advantage in not being ſo monotonous, and conſequently not ſo fatiguing; the conqueſt of difficulties is the great merit of poetry, and the principal ſource of the pleaſure it occaſions: Is it not on this account that we ſeldom read a long work in verſe at once without diſguſt, and that the charms of verſification affect us leſs in proportion to our advancement in years?

However it be, as poets have formed languages, ſo the harmony of poetry has given birth to that of proſe. Malherbe among us wrote harmonious odes, when our proſe was barbarous and uncouth: We are indebted to Balzac for firſt giving it harmony. "Eloquence, ſays "Mr. Voltaire, has ſo much power over mankind, "that we admire Balzac in his time, for having found "that ſmall ſhare of an unknown, but neceſſary art, "which conſiſts in the choice of harmonious words, "and for having uſed them out of their place." The ſtyle of Thucidides, which wants nothing but harmony, according to Cicero, is like the buckler of Minerva by Phidias, which might be taken to pieces.

There are two things which charm the ear in a diſcourſe, ſound, and number; the ſound, by the quality of the words; the number, by their arrangement. It is not eaſy for an orator to err in theſe points; as little pretenſions as he may have to a fine ear, the pronunciation

ciation alone will enable him to diſtinguiſh ſounds that are ſweet and melodious, from thoſe which are harſh and unmuſical; and for the ſame reaſon thoſe, which when connected are ſmooth and harmonious, from thoſe which are rough and uneven; but there is another thing with reſpect to harmony to be attended to, which is equally neceſſary with the choice and ſucceſſion of words, and which requires a well-verſed and delicate ear.

As in muſic, the agreement of the melody does not ariſe only from the relation which the ſounds, but alſo which the ſeveral phraſes of the ſong, have to each other; ſo oratory (which is more analogous to muſical harmony than we imagine) conſiſts in not making too great an inequality betwixt the members of the ſame phraſe; and alſo in not making the laſt members too ſhort in proportion to the firſt; to ſhun equally periods which are too long, and phraſes which are too contracted, or, if I may ſay ſo, half blown, a ſtyle, which takes away our breath, and one which obliges us to draw it every inſtant, which reſembles a kind of chequer work; in fine, to know how to intermingle rounded and well-ſupported periods, with others which are leſs, and only ſerve for the repoſe of the ear. It is ſcarce to be believed, how much a ſingle word, being longer or ſhorter at the end of a phraſe, or a termination being maſculine or feminine, or even the difference of a ſingle ſyllable, changes the harmony of the whole. The cloſe ſtudy of the beſt maſters, joined to a quick and ſenſible ear, will teach us better than all the rules in the world.

As

As to affectation and ſtifneſs, thoſe enemies to every kind of beauty, they are not leſs ſo in this reſpect. Cicero ſo difficult in every thing relating to harmony of ſtyle, condemns Theopompus very juſtly for his extreme attention to avoid every concourſe of vowels. Cuſtom and the ear, muſt procure for us this talent of themſelves, without fatigue. The practiſed orator, by a kind of inſtinct, perceives the ſucceſſion of harmonious words, as a good reader ſees by a glance of his eyes, the ſyllables which go before and thoſe which come after.

In imitation of the antients, we have baniſhed the great verſe from our proſe; but it is remarkable that our moſt ſounding proſe contains many verſes of ſmaller meaſure, which being properly intermixed and without rhyme, give it all the agreeableneſs of poetry, without that monotony and uniformity, for which our verſe is reproached. The proſe of Moliere abounds with this kind of verſe, the firſt ſcene of the Sicilian furniſhes us with an example.

Chut n'avancez pas d'avantage
Et demeurez en cet endroit,
Juſqu'a ce que, je vous appelle
Ill fait nour commé dans un four mouche
Le ciel ſi eſt habille ce ſoir en ſcara
Et je ne vois pas une cloile,
Que montre le bout de ſon nez
Sotte condition que celle diin eſclave
Dene vivre jamais pour ſoi,

Et

Et d'etre toujours, tout enties
Aux paſſions d' un maitre

The reſt of the piece is pretty nearly of the ſame kind.

The harmonious diſpoſition of words is ſometimes incompatable with their logical arrangement; what ſhall be done in this caſe? A rigid philoſopher would not heſitate at all; reaſon is his maſter, I had almoſt ſaid, his tyrant. The orator, as much a captive to his ear, as the philoſopher to reaſon, ſacrifices ſometimes harmony, ſometimes juſtneſs, according to the object he has in view; harmony, when he wants to ſtrike by things; juſtneſs, when he ſeeks to attract by expreſſion; but theſe ſacrifices ought ſeldom to be made, and then only in light inſtances.

To unite juſtneſs and harmony was in all probability the ſuperior talent of Demoſthenes; but in a dead language, the merit of theſe two qualities in a great meaſure diſappears. We ſuppoſe more than we feel ‡, and its no wonder that ſome moderns in doing juſtice to his eloquence, ſhould not be ſtruck in the ſame manner as the Athenians; their admiration doubtleſs was juſt, becauſe they were a delicate and ſenſible

 nation;

‡ In pronouncing Latin verſes, we maim the proſody and the meaſure every moment we make long ſhort, and ſhort long; we dwell upon vowels which ought to diſappear on account of the eliſion; in ſhort, we ſcan the verſe againſt the ſenſe, and yet we find harmony in Latin verſe; is this reaſon or prejudice? I have ſaid we ſcan the verſe againſt the ſenſe, the demonſtration is eaſy. In ſcanning for example hexameter verſes, we ſtop at the laſt ſyllable of the dactyle, and

nation; and they underſtood his eloquence and his language. Ours in the ſame degree would be the extravagance of enthuſiaſm.

The rational eſteem of a philoſopher does more honour to great writers, than the exclamations of a college, and the prejudice of pedants. Pindar was certainly a great poet; antiquity, more capable of deciding his merit than we, has pronounced him ſuch; but is this a reaſon why we ſhould admire him like infants, even in his extravagancies?

Can we laugh at any thing more ridiculous than the commentary of Deſpreaux on the firſt ode of this author, and his efforts to give a ſublime tranſlation of the fantaſtical mixture, which the Greek poet makes of water, gold, and the ſun, with the olympic games, in the ſame ſtrophe? If Perrault or Chapelain had been the author of ſuch a one, what a copious ſubject would it have afforded for pleaſantry or ſatyr.

But to return to our ſubject: however agreeable harmony may be in itſelf, it will loſe a great deal of its value, if it is only employed in adorning a looſe, diffuſe ſtyle. A conciſe ſtyle, which is neither disjointed nor obſcure, has this ſingular merit above all others, to make a diſcourſe reſemble the progreſs of the

and yet it is always ſhort; 'tis juſt as if in a compoſition of muſick, conſiſting of minims and crochets, we ſhould ſtop and dwell upon the laſt chrochet; we ſcan verſes as if the dactyle, inſtead of being a long ſyllable followed by two ſhort ones, was a ſhort ſyllable followed by two long ones. Muſicians will underſtand me, and I muſt uſe too many words to be underſtood by others.

mind,

mind, and imitate that rapid operation by which the intellectual powers communicate their ideas. We become often more obscure in shunning brevity, than in courting it; in taking the longest rout we often lose our way; the surest method of accomplishing our purpose, is to go the shortest road, provided we can keep constantly advancing, and not leaping from one place to another. Brevity does not consist in omitting any necessary ideas, but in ranging each idea in its proper place, and expressing it by the most proper terms; by this means our style will have this twofold advantage, of being concise without fatiguing, and explicit without being loose.

From these principles we may judge how distant from true eloquence is that loquacity so frequent at the bar, which consists in saying a very little in a great many words; two reasons have contributed to this fault, (than which there cannot be a more unsupportable one to true genius) the false ideas of eloquence, which are entertained in our colleges, where youth are taught to drown a common thought in a deluge of insipid periods; and that example of Cicero, who is too often verbose, "He who has life and pith, says "Montaigne, is stuffed with his long-winded sentences." 'Tis true, Cicero makes us forget this fault for the other qualities of an orator, which he possesses in a supreme degree; but the defects of great writers are always imitated by middling authors.

It is not sufficient that the style of the orator be clear, correct, noble, harmonious, lively, and concise;

it muſt alſo be eaſy; or, in other words, the pains it coſts muſt not be perceivable.

Cicero, ſo often cited already, and who cannot be too much recommended, in a treatiſe concerning eloquence, owes one of his greateſt charms to the inimitable facility of his ſtyle. If we perceive a ſlight degree of ſtudy, it is in his care to arrange his words, and yet we may ſee this care does not coſt him much; and that the words, after preſenting themſelves to his mind without ſeeking for them, come in of themſelves, and marſhal themſelves without trouble under his pen.

The true character of the eloquence of Cicero, in my opinion, is, a happy conjunction of eaſe and harmony. It is this union, being ſo difficult to imitate, which renders this author ſo hard to tranſlate, eſpecially in a language like ours, where the inverſion is not permitted, and where a forced arrangement of words is a continual danger to the harmony. The habit and uſe of writing in verſe, produces thoſe ſigns of affectation and labour in writing in proſe, which the orator ought very carefully to avoid.

Moſt poets, accuſtomed to the ordinary language of verſification, tranſport themſelves, againſt their will, into proſe; and, if they make any efforts to become ſimple, they are conſtrained and ſtiff; if they abandon themſelves to the negligence of their pen, their ſtyle is languid and ſpiritleſs. Thus, our poets have commonly ſucceeded ill in proſe. The prefaces of Racine are feebly written; thoſe of Corneille are as defective in point of language, as they are excellent

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in depth of matter. The profe of Rouſſeau is hard, that of Deſpreaux heavy, and that of Fontaine inſipid.

Nothing is more oppoſite to an eaſy ſtyle, and conſequently to a good taſte, than that figurative and poetical language, which is charged with metaphors and antitheſes, which is called, for what reaſon I cannot tell, the academic ſtyle, though the moſt celebrated members of the French academy have ſhunned it with care, and ſeverely proſcribed it in their works. We may call it, with more reaſon, the ſtyle of the pulpit, as being uſed by moſt of our modern preachers: It makes their ſermons reſemble—not the effuſion of a heart penetrated with the truths which it wants to perſuade others, but a kind of tedious, monotonous repreſentation, where the actor is applauding himſelf, without being attended to. What ſhall we ſay of a man, who, being about to addreſs us on the things of a world, where we are moſt intereſted, acquits himſelf by a ſtudied, meaſured diſcourſe, charged with figures and ornaments? Can this rhetorician appear to us any otherwiſe, than as acting an inſipid and ridiculous part? This is the true picture of the generality of our preachers. Their declamations ſeem beneath the pious comedies of our miſſionaries, which make men of the world ſmile, and common people weep. Theſe miſſionaries ſeem at leaſt to be affected with what they deliver, and their elocution, coarſe and unpoliſhed as it is, produces its effect on thoſe for whom it is calculated.

Is it not aſtoniſhing after this, that the eloquence of the pulpit ſhould be regarded as a bad ſpecies, by thoſe who confound this ſpecies with the abuſe of it? Le Petit Careme of father Maſſillon will ſuffice to teach Chriſtian orators, and their judges, the difference betwixt true elegance, and that affectation to which it is oppoſed. We may likewiſe appeal to the ſermon on the humanity of the great, which preachers ought conſtantly to read, to form a good taſte, and princes to be acquainted with, to learn they are men.

The ſimplicity and nature of Maſſillon appear to me more qualified to lead us into the ſpirit of the truth of Chriſtianity, than all the dialectic of Boudaloue. The logic of the goſpel is in our hearts; there only muſt we ſeek for it. The moſt preſſing arguments in favour of the diſtreſſed, will never touch him, who can ſee his fellow creatures ſuffer without being moved; an inſenſible mind is an harpſichord without ſtrings, from which it is impoſſible to draw any ſound. If the dialectic is neceſſary, it is only in matters of doctrine, and theſe are more calculated for books than the pulpit, which is only the theatre of great emotion, and not minute diſcuſſion.

The ſeverity of controverſy rejects and proſcribes every-thing, but reaſon and proof. To inſtruct and convince are its only object; we ought not to undertake to prove the truths of Chriſtianity in ſermons, or in verſe. The recollection of the cloſet, and the auſterity of proſe, are more adapted to a matter ſo ſerious.

In

In explaining the rules of oratorical elocution, we have given thoſe of ſtyle in general. The orator, the hiſtorian, and the philoſopher, (for one may reduce all writers to theſe claſſes) differ from each other moſt in the ſubject they treat of, and this difference of ſubject renders a difference of ſtyle neceſſary. The hiſtorian ought to think and paint; the philoſopher ſhould feel and think; the orator feel, paint, and think. But elocution has but one rule for all: To be clear, preciſe, harmonious, and alſo eaſy and natural.

The affectation of ſtyle, always painful and diſguſting, is peculiarly ſo in matters of philoſophy, which ought to ſhine in their own beauty, the chief ornament being the ſubject itſelf, and which reject, as unworthy, all borrowed finery. It is principally to theſe matters, that we may apply that beautiful paſſage of Petronius; "Grandis et ut ita dicam pudica "oratio naturali pulchritudine exurgit." The great, and, if I may ſay, the chaſte oration, riſes up in its own natural beauty.

In a word, truth, ſimplicity, and nature, are all which a writer ought to have conſtantly before his eyes. The eſſential point of good writing is, to be rich in ideas; but ideas are ſcarce, and rhetoric common.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GENEVA.

THE city of Geneva ſtands upon two hills at the end of the lake, which at preſent bears its name, and was formerly called the Leman Lake. The ſituation is delightful;—on one ſide you ſee the lake,—on the other the Rhone, and all around a beautiful country:—Hills covered with rural villas the whole length of the lake; and here and there the frozen ſummits of the Alps, which in fine weather, when illuminated by the ſun, look like mountains of ſilver.

The port of Geneva, upon the lake, ſecured by moles, furniſhed with veſſels, having a good mart, and lying between France, Italy, and Germany, renders the inhabitants induſtrious, commercial, and opulent.

Geneva has many fine buildings, and agreeable walks:—The ſtreets are well lighted in the night, and they have erected an engine upon the Rhone, very ſimple in its conſtruction, which can raiſe water an hundred feet; and by that means ſupplies the higheſt parts of the town.—The lake is about eighteen leagues in length, and between four and five in breadth in the broadeſt part. It is a kind of ſmaller ſea, ſubject to tempeſts, and exhibiting other curious phænomena.

Julius Cæſar ſpeaks of Geneva as a town of the Allobroges, at that time a Roman province: He came

came there to ſtop the progreſs of the Helvetians, known ſince by the name of Swiſs.—When Chriſtianity was introduced, it became an epiſcopal ſee, ſubject to the biſhop of Vienna.—At the beginning of the fifth century, the emperor Honorius gave up the government to the citizens, who were diſpoſſeſſed of it again in 534, by the French king.

When Charlemagne, towards the end of the eighth century, went to attack the kings of Lombardy, and to deliver the Roman pontiffs from thoſe tyrants, (for which he was rewarded with the imperial crown) he came to Geneva, and made it the general rendezvous of his army.—It was afterwards annexed as an inheritance to the German empire, and Conrad was crowned there in 1034.—But the ſucceeding emperors, occupied in more important buſineſs, which the reſtleſs ſpirit of the holy ſee was perpetually furniſhing for more than 300 years, overlooked Geneva, which inſenſibly ſhook off the yoke, and became an imperial city, having the biſhop for its prince, or rather its chief magiſtrate, whoſe authority was reſtrained by that of the citizens. The arms they took from that time were expreſſive of this ſort of mixed government, an imperial eagle on one ſide, the reverſe, a key, repreſenting the power of the church, with this device, "Poſt tenebras lux."

The city of Geneva ſtill retains theſe arms, after having renounced the Roman church.—They have nothing in common with the papacy, but the keys, which they bear upon their eſcutcheon; and it is ſomething ſingular, that they retain even theſe, after

having broke, with a kind of superstition, every other connection with Rome:—They seem to have imagined, that the device "Post tenebras lux," which, as they thought, expressed exactly their religious condition, would not allow them to make any alteration in the other parts of their arms.

Their neighbours the dukes of Savoy, countenanced sometimes by the bishop, made many attempts upon the liberty of the Genevois, which they bravely repelled, supported by the alliance of Fribourg and Berne.—It was at that time, that is, about the year 1526, that the council of the two hundred was established.—The opinions of Luther and Zuinglius began then to gain ground; they had been embraced at Berne, were approved of by the Genevois, and, in 1535, established among them; popery was abolished, and the bishop, who still takes upon him the title of bishop of Geneva, without having any more jurisdiction there, than the bishop of Babylon has in his diocese, has been since that time resident at Annecy.

There is yet to be seen, between the two gates of the town's hall at Geneva, a Latin inscription, in memory of the abolition of the Catholic religion: The pope is there called Antichrist.—This expression, which, in the first fervours of liberty and innovation, might be indulged to that uncultivated age, seems to us, at this time, rather unworthy the philosophic spirit of Geneva. Let us recommend to them to substitute, in the stead of this rude and injurious memorial,

memorial, ſomething better, and with more truth and ſimplicity.

In reſpect to the Catholics, the pope is the head of the true church:—To Proteſtants, the wiſer and more moderate of them, he is a ſovereign prince intitled to reſpect, though not obedience; but, in an age like this, the notion of Antichriſt ſhould be forgotten.

To maintain their liberty againſt the enterprizes of the dukes of Savoy, and of their own biſhops, the Genevois ſtrengthened themſelves farther by an alliance with Zurich, but eſpecially with France.—By theſe they were enabled to reſiſt the armies of Charles Emmanuel, and the treaſures of Philip the ſecond, a man whoſe ambition and deſpotiſm, cruelty and ſuperſtition, have loaded his memory with the execrations of all poſterity.—Henry the fourth, who had ſent 300 ſoldiers to aid the Genevois, had himſelf ſoon after occaſion for their aſſiſtance, which proved ſerviceable to him during the time of the league, and on other occaſions; and from hence the Genevois, as well as the Switzers, derive thoſe privileges which they enjoy in France.

Deſirous of doing honour to their city, the Genevois invited Calvin amongſt them, who had very deſervedly gained a high reputation: He was a man of the firſt rank in point of learning; wrote Latin as well as a dead language would allow, and French with a purity very rare in that age.—This excellence, which able grammarians admire even now, rendered his writings much ſuperior to moſt of his own time;

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as the works of Meſſrs. de Port Royal are diſtinguiſhed at this day, on the ſame account, from the barbarous rhapſodies of their adverſaries and cotemporaries.

Calvin, who was an able lawyer, and a wiſe divine, though heretical, compoſed, in concert with the magiſtrates, a body of civil and eccleſiaſtical laws, which received the ſanction of the people in the year 1543, and are become the eſtabliſhed laws of the republic.

The ſuperfluous wealth of the church, which, before the reformation, ſerved only to pamper the luxury of the biſhops, and their dependants, was employed in founding an hoſpital, a college, and an academy.—But the wars, in which Geneva was engaged for near 60 years, retarded the progreſs of the arts, and of commerce, as well as the ſciences. In fine, the ill ſucceſs of the eſcalade, attempted by the duke of Savoy in 1602, is the epocha of the tranquillity of this republic.

The Genevois repulſed their enemies, who had attacked them by ſurprize; and, to deter the duke from attempting ſuch kinds of enterprizes for the future, they ordered three of his principal generals to be hanged. They thought they had a right to treat as criminals and robbers, thoſe who attacked their city, without having made any declaration of war; for this ſingular and modern piece of policy, of making war without any declaration, was at that time unkown in Europe; and though it has been a practice ever ſince among the larger ſtates, it is too injurious to ſmall ones ever to be reliſhed by them.

Duke

Duke Charles having loſt his generals, and finding himſelf thus repulſed, gave over all thoughts of making himſelf maſter of Geneva.—His example ſerved for a leſſon to his ſucceſſors; and, ſince that period, Geneva has been gradually increaſing in inhabitants, riches, and improvements, in the boſom of peace. Some inteſtine diſſentions indeed (the laſt of which happened in 1738,) have now and then diſturbed a little the tranquillity of the ſtate, but they have been all happily compoſed under the mediation of France, and the confederate cantons; and their ſecurity againſt foreign dangers is now better provided for than ever, by two late treaties; one concluded in 1749 with France, the other in 1754, with the king of Sardinia.

It is very remarkable, that a city, which contains ſcarce 24,000 inhabitants, and whoſe ſcattered territory conſiſts not of 30 villages, ſhould be a ſovereign ſtate, and one of the moſt flouriſhing cities of Europe; enriched by her liberty and her commerce, ſhe frequently beholds every-thing around her in flames, without having any ſhare in the calamity. The events which diſturb the reſt of Europe, afford her only an amuſing ſpectacle, which ſhe obſerves without taking any part in them. Attached to France by treaties and by commerce, to England by commerce and religion, ſhe is too prudent to intereſt herſelf in the wars that embroil theſe two powerful nations; ſhe pronounces with impartiality upon the juſtice of their conteſts, and judges all the ſovereigns of Europe, without flattering, injuring, or fearing them.

The

The city is well fortified, particularly on the side of that prince from whom it has most to fear, the king of Sardinia. On the side of France it is almost open and defenceless; but discipline is kept up as in a military place, the arsenals and magazines well furnished, every citizen is a soldier, as in Switzerland and antient Rome: — The Genevois are allowed to go into foreign service, but the republic does not furnish any state with regular bodies of men, nor does it suffer an inrolment within its own territories.

Though the individuals are rich, the government is poor, from that aversion which the people shew to new taxes, how little burthensome soever. The revenues of the state do not amount to 500,000 livres of French money; and yet, by the admirable œconomy with which they are managed, they are sufficient, and even afford a surplus for extraordinary emergencies.

The people of Geneva are divided into four classes. 1. Citizens — Who are the sons of burgesses, and born in the city; these only are intitled to any share in the magistracy. 2. Burgesses — Who are the sons of burgesses or citizens, but born in a foreign country — or strangers, who have obtained the freedom of the city, which the magistrates have a power to bestow: — These may be appointed of the general council, and even of the grand council, called the council of 200. 3. Inhabitants — Strangers, who have the permission of the magistrates to live there, but no other privilege. 4. Natives — The sons of inhabitants; these have some privileges their fathers have

have not, but are excluded from all ſhare in the government.

At the head of the republic are four ſyndics, the members of which continue only for one year, and cannot be re-elected till the expiration of four years: To theſe are joined a ſmall council, conſiſting of 20 counſellors, a treaſurer, and two ſecretaries of ſtate; and another corps, which is called the corps of juſtice. The daily occurrences which require diſpatch, whether of a criminal or civil kind, are the province of theſe two bodies of men.

The grand council is compoſed of 250 citizens, or burgeſſes; theſe determine upon the more important affairs of the civil government, grant pardons, coin money, elect the members of the petit council, and deliberate on what is proper to be laid before the general council, which comprehends the whole body of the citizens and burgeſſes, except thoſe under 20,—bankrupts, and thoſe who are rendered infamous:—To this aſſembly belongs the legiſlative power, the right of making peace and war, concluding treaties, impoſing taxes, and electing the principal magiſtrates, which is done in the cathedral, with great order and decency, though the number of the electors is about 1500.

It is obſervable from this account, that the government of Geneva has all the advantages, without any of the inconveniences, of a democracy. Every thing is under the direction of the ſyndics: All meaſures for public deliberation proceed from the petit council, and are returned there to be put in execution.

cution.—The city of Geneva ſeems to have taken for its model that wiſe law of the antient Germans recorded by Tacitus; "De minoribus rebus principes conſultant, de majoribus omnes; ita tamen, "ut ea quorum penes plebem arbitrium eſt, apud "principes prætractentur."

The civil law of Geneva is almoſt intirely a tranſcript of the Roman civil law, with ſome modifications; for inſtance, a father is not allowed the free diſpoſal of more than half his fortune, the reſt is divided equally amongſt his children. This law ſecures, on one hand, the dependance of the child; and prevents the injuſtice of the father, on the other.

M. de Monteſquieu, with reaſon, calls that an excellent law, which excludes from all public employments thoſe who do not diſcharge their fathers debts after his death; and yet with more reaſon, thoſe who do not pay their own.

The degrees of conſanguinity, within which marriage is prohibited, are not extended beyond thoſe of the Levitical law. Thus, germain-couſins are allowed to marry, but the prohibited degrees admit of no diſpenſation.—Divorce is allowed in caſe of adultery, or wilful deſertion after judicial proclamations.

Criminal juſtice is executed with more regularity than rigour. The torture, which is now laid aſide in moſt countries, and ſhould be every-where, as a uſeleſs cruelty, is aboliſhed at Geneva. It is only made uſe of to criminals under ſentence of death, in order to diſcover their accomplices, where it is neceſſary.

The

The perſon accuſed has a right to a copy of the proceedings againſt him, and may require the aſſiſtance of his parents, and of an advocate, who is allowed eight hours to defend him before the judges. Criminal ſentences are pronounced in public by the ſyndics with much ſolemnity.

Hereditary dignity is unknown at Geneva: The ſons of the firſt magiſtrate are loſt in the crowd, till their own merit diſtinguiſhes them; nobility and riches confer neither rank nor privilege, nor give any facility of advancement to the offices of the ſtate. All ſolicitation for places is ſtrictly prohibited:—Public employments are ſo little lucrative, they afford no temptations for the avaricious: They are objects only to nobler minds, by the conſideration and reſpect they procure.

Few diſputes come to a legal trial, they are generally adjuſted by common friends, by the advocates themſelves, and by the judges.

Their ſumptuary laws forbid the uſe of jewels and embroidery, limit the expence of funerals, and oblige all the citizens to walk on foot in the ſtreets, carriages being allowed only in the country.—Theſe laws, which are regarded in France as too ſevere, nay, almoſt barbarous and inhuman, by no means abridge the real conveniences of life, which are always to be obtained at little expence; they retrench only the pageantry of it, which contributes not to happineſs, and often produces ruin, without any advantage.

There

There is, perhaps, no-where ſo many happy marriages; Geneva has, in this reſpect, the ſtart of our manners at leaſt two centuries: — The reſtraints upon luxury remove the fear of a multitude of children; and by this means luxury is not, as in France, one of the greateſt obſtacles to population.

Plays are not ſuffered at Geneva, not becauſe they diſapprove of theſe diverſions themſelves, but they are afraid, it ſeems, that a turn for dreſs, for diſſipation and licentiouſneſs, ſhould be introduced among their youth, by ſuch entertainments. Is it not poſſible, however, to remedy this inconvenience, by wiſe and well executed laws for the conduct of the players? By ſuch means Geneva might enjoy theſe amuſements, preſerve their manners, and have the benefit of both. — Dramatic repreſentations would form the taſte of the citizens, and give them a delicacy of feeling, and an elegance of ſentiment, which are very difficult to be acquired without this reſource. Learning would improve, licentiouſneſs would not increaſe, and Geneva might unite the wiſdom of Sparta, with the politeneſs of Athens.

There is another conſideration worthy the regard of ſo wiſe and learned a republic, and ought, perhaps, to perſuade them to admit theſe entertainments. That barbarous prejudice againſt the profeſſion of a player, that kind of ignominy which we throw upon theſe people, who are ſo neceſſary to the progreſs and ſupport of the fine arts, is certainly one of the principal cauſes of the irregularities they are reproached with. They ſeek, in the indulgences of pleaſure,

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ſome recompence for that want of reſpect, which their profeſſion cannot obtain.

A comedian, amongſt us, who behaves well, deſerves a double ſhare of reſpect, and yet we ſcarce think him intitled to any. — The ſcribbler, who inſults the public diſtreſs, and ſupports himſelf by it; the courtier, who cringes and bows, but pays no debts; — theſe are a ſort of people we honour moſt. If comedians were not only tolerated at Geneva, but properly regulated, countenanced, reſpected as they deſerve; and, in ſhort, put upon the ſame footing with the reſt of the citizens, this city would ſoon have the advantage of poſſeſſing what is thought ſo rare, and yet is made ſo by our own fault, a company of reſpectable comedians, which would ſoon become the beſt in Europe. Perſons of good taſte, and of a turn for the theatre, who are afraid of hurting their characters with us, by this ſort of employment, would reſort to Geneva, in order to cultivate, not only without reproach, but with reſpect, a talent ſo agreeable and uncommon. Reſiding here, which many of the French think ſo melancholy, from the want of public entertainments, would then be living amongſt liberal pleaſures, and in the boſom of liberty and philoſophy; and ſtrangers would no longer be ſurpriſed at ſeeing, in a place where decent and regular entertainments are forbidden, the permiſſion of thoſe groſs and buffoon farces, which are equally offenſive to good taſte and good manners: — This is not all; in a little time, the example of the comedians of Geneva, the regularity of their conduct, and the regard paid

paid to them, would ſerve as a model to the comedians of other nations, and a leſſon to thoſe who have hitherto treated them with ſo much rigour, and even contempt:—We ſhould no longer ſee them penſioned by the government, and anathematized by the church:—Our prieſts would loſe the habit of excommunicating, our citizens of deſpiſing them; and a ſmall republic would have the honour of having reformed Europe in this point, a more important one perhaps than we are aware of.

Geneva has an univerſity, which they call an academy, where youth are educated without expence: The profeſſors are eligible into offices of ſtate—Many of them have become magiſtrates, and this privilege contributes much to keep up the emulation and fame of the academy.—Some years ago they eſtabliſhed a ſchool for deſigning. The advocates, ſcriveners, and phyſicians, form ſeveral bodies, into which none are admitted, till after public examination. All the trading companies have likewiſe their regulations, their apprenticeſhips, and their governors.

Their public library is a well choſen collection of books, conſiſting of ſix and twenty thouſand volumes, and a great number of MSS. The books are lent to all the citizens, every one reads and informs himſelf; and, by this means, the people of Geneva are better inſtructed than any-where elſe. They find none of thoſe inconveniences, which we ſuppoſe would follow the ſame indulgence amongſt us; perhaps the Genevois and our politicians may both be in the right.

Geneva

Geneva was the firſt, after England, in adopting the practice of inoculation for the ſmall-pox, which has been eſtabliſhed with ſuch difficulty in France; which however is eſtabliſhed, notwithſtanding many of our phyſicians ſtill oppoſe it, as their predeceſſors did the circulation of the blood, the uſe of emetics, and many other inconteſtable truths, and practical improvements.

All the ſciences, and moſt of the arts, have been cultivated with ſo much ſucceſs at Geneva, that it is ſurpriſing to ſee the liſt of learned men and artiſts of every kind, which this city has produced within the two laſt ages.—It has even had the good fortune ſometimes to be the reſidence of celebrated ſtrangers, whom its agreeable ſituation, and the liberty it enjoys, have invited to retire thither. M. de Voltaire, who has reſided there for the laſt ſeven years, finds, among theſe republicans, the ſame marks of eſteem and conſideration, which he has received from ſo many monarchs.

The art of making clocks and watches is in great perfection at Geneva; more than five thouſand people are employed in it, that is to ſay, more than a fifth part of the citizens. The other arts, agriculture eſpecially, are not neglected. Their great care and labour is a remedy againſt the natural poverty of the ſoil. All the houſes are built of ſtone, which very often prevents fires; aſſiſtance is immediately had, when they do happen, by their admirable regulations for extinguiſhing fires.

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The hoſpitals at Geneva are not, as in other places, a mere refuge for infirmity and diſeaſe, the poor traveller is hoſpitably entertained in them; and beſides, a number of ſmall contributions are received there, and doled out to poor families, to enable them to live, without leaving their homes, or their employments. The hoſpitals expend yearly more than treble their revenue: Such is the munificence and charitable diſpoſition of theſe people.

What remains, is to ſay ſomething of the religion of Geneva; a ſubject more intereſting, perhaps, to philoſophers than any other: We will therefore enter into this matter with ſome particularity, deſiring our reader, however, to remember, that we are writing hiſtory, not controverſy, and that to relate is not to approve.

The eccleſiaſtical conſtitution of Geneva is pure Preſbyterianiſm; no biſhops nor canons;—Not that they diſapprove of Epiſcopacy, but, as they have no faith in the divine right of biſhops, they think paſtors, not quite ſo rich and important as biſhops, agree better with a ſmall republic.

The miniſters are either paſtors, like our pariſh prieſts, or poſtulans, as our prieſts without benefice. The revenue of the paſtors does not amount to above 1200 livres, without any caſual profits:—The ſtate makes this allowance.—The church has nothing. The miniſters are not admitted till they are 24 years of age, and then not till after very ſtrict examinations, both of their learning and morals.—It were much to be wiſhed our church would follow this example.

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The clergy have nothing to do with funerals, it is a mere act of the police, and is done without any parade: They think at Geneva all pomp on such occasions ridiculous.—They bury their dead in a large cimetery, at a convenient distance from the city; a custom that should be followed every-where.

The clergy of Geneva are men of exemplary manners: The ministers live in great harmony together; they are never seen, as in other countries, disputing with bitterness upon subjects that are not intelligible; persecuting one another, accusing one another indecently before the magistrates: It is necessary, however, that they agree in those articles that are thought essential to religion.—Most of them do not believe in the divinity of Christ, of which Calvin, their chief, was so zealous a defender, and on which account he had Servetus burned to death. When they are told of this barbarity, which throws a stain upon the charity and moderation of their patriarch, they do not attempt to defend him; they acknowledge, that Calvin did a very blameable thing, and they content themselves (if it is a Catholic they are talking to) with opposing to the death of Servetus, the horrid day of St. Bartholomew (which every honest Frenchman wishes to blot from our history, even with his blood,) and the punishment of John Huss, which the Catholics themselves, they say, do not venture to justify; where humanity and good faith were equally violated; and which should cover the memory of the emperor Sigismond with eternal disgrace.

It is no inconsiderable proof of the progress of human reason, says M. Voltaire, that it has been allowed to say, in a book printed at Geneva with public approbation, (An essay on universal history by this author) "Calvin had a bad heart with a good understanding, the death of Servetus appears at this day abominable." We presume, the encomiums, due to this noble liberty of thinking and writing, belong equally to the author, to his age, and to Geneva. How many countries are there, in which philosophy has made equal progress, but where truth is still in captivity, where reason dares not raise her voice, to reprobate what she condemns in silence, and where too many pusillanimous writers, whom they called learned, pay respect to prejudices, which they might remove with equal decency and success.

The notion of hell, one of the great articles of our creed, many of the clergy of Geneva do not believe in. They think it injurious to the Deity to suppose, that a Being of so much goodness and justice should be capable of punishing our faults with an eternity of torment.

They explain away, as well as they can, the passages of Scripture, which expressly contradict this opinion, asserting, that no passage in the sacred books should be literally interpreted, against which humanity and reason revolt. They believe, however, that there are sufferings in another life, but these only temporary: Thus Purgatory, which was one of the principal causes of the separation of Protestants from the Roman communion, is the only punishment they

they believe in after death ;—Another inſtance to be added to the hiſtory of human contradictions.

In ſhort, perfect Socinianiſm is the religion of moſt of their paſtors ; rejecting every-thing that is called myſtery, they imagine the firſt principle of a religion that is true, is, to propoſe nothing as an article of faith, that is not reconcileable to reaſon: Thus, when they are urged with the neceſſity of revelation, ſo eſſential a doctrine of Chriſtianity, they ſubſtitute the term of *utility*, which they like better. In this, if they are not orthodox, they are at leaſt conſiſtent with their own principles.

A clergy, who think in this manner, ſhould have a ſpirit of toleration, which is a ſufficient reaſon to make them regarded with an evil eye by the miniſters of other reformed churches : One may venture to ſay, however, without intending to approve in other reſpects the religion of Geneva, that there are few countries where the theologians and eccleſiaſtics are greater enemies to ſuperſtition ; on the other hand, as intolerance and ſuperſtition ſerve only to multiply unbelievers, there are fewer complaints at Geneva, than in other places, of the progreſs of infidelity ; which is not to be wondered at. Religion there is confined almoſt intirely to the adoration of one God, at leaſt among thoſe who are not of the multitude ; a reverence for Chriſt, and for the Scriptures, are perhaps the only points that diſtinguiſh from pure Deiſm the Chriſtianity of Geneva.

Toleration is not the only good quality of the eccleſiaſtics ; obſerving ſtrictly the duties of their function,

they are the firſt in giving the citizens an example of ſubmiſſion to the laws. The conſiſtory, eſtabliſhed to ſuperintend their conduct, inflict only ſpiritual puniſhments. The differing intereſts of church and ſtate, which, in times of ignorance, have ſhaken the crowns of ſo many emperors, and which we know but too well have been the cauſe of dreadful calamities even in more enlightened ages, are quite unknown at Geneva. The clergy do nothing without the approbation of the magiſtrates.

Their worſhip is ſimple and plain; no images, no lights, no ornaments in their churches. They have juſt now new-fronted their cathedral in a good taſte, perhaps, in a little time, they may decorate the inſide of their churches: Where, indeed, ſhould be the inconvenience of having pictures and ſtatues, directing the people, if they thought proper not to pay any worſhip to them, to regard them only as memorials intended to repreſent, in a ſtriking and agreeable manner, the great events of religion? Superſtition would not be encouraged by this, and the arts would improve. We ſpeak here as the reader would think, on the principles of the Genevois clergy, not on thoſe of the Catholic faith.

Their church ſervice conſiſts of ſermons and hymns; their ſermons are in a great meaſure confined to ſubjects of morality, by which they are ſo much the better; their ſinging is in a wretched taſte, and the French verſes they ſing ſtill worſe: One would hope they will make ſome reform in this reſpect. They have lately placed an organ in the cathedral, and perhaps,

haps, in time, may perform the religious worſhip in better language, and with better muſic. In other reſpects, truth obliges us to ſay, the Supreme Being is worſhipped at Geneva with a decency and ſobriety not to be found in our churches.

We ſhould not probably have ſaid ſo much, if we had been writing upon the government of a great monarchy. In the eye of philoſophy, the republic of bees is not leſs intereſting than the hiſtory of a mighty kingdom; and perhaps it is only in little ſtates that we can find a perfect model of political government. If religion will not allow us to think the Genevois have taken the beſt means to ſecure the happineſs of another life, reaſon obliges us to confeſs, they are almoſt as happy as they can be in this.—

O fortunatos nimium ſua ſi bona norint!

THE ABUSE OF CRITICISM IN RELIGION.

Quæ caput a cœli regionibus oſtendebat.

FAther Laubruſſel, an author of little note, and leſs merit, publiſhed a work, which has been long ſince forgot, with the ſame title that this bears. His aim was to revenge religion of thoſe impotent attacks which infidelity and hereſy have made againſt it. The enterprize was very laudable, and it is to be lamented that he was not more happy in the execution of it; and that he has ſo frequently ſubſtituted declamations and injuries in the room of reaſoning; however, without approving his logic, we may reckon ſomething to the account of his zeal, if zeal ought to cover a multitude of trifles, as charity a multitude of ſins. The object we have in view is very different from this, but not leſs uſeful, and we ſhall endeavour to execute it better. It is to vindicate philoſophers from the reproach of impiety with which they have often been unjuſtly charged, by aſcribing to them ſentiments not their own; giving forced interpretations to their words; drawing from their principles odious and falſe conſequences which they diſavow; in a word, by ſtigmatizing as criminal, or dangerous, opinions which Chriſtianity has not forbid. Among the innumerable abuſes with which criticiſm may be reproached, there is none more pernicious than that we are complaining of: it is highly neceſſary therefore

therefore we ſhould pull off the maſk, and diſcountenance it.

The importance of this ſubject, perhaps, would require a conſiderable work; the reflexions I am going to lay before the reader are but a plan or ſketch; may they meet with the approbation of thoſe ſages who equally underſtand the rights of faith and reaſon; may this ſcheme of an apology be eſteemed and adopted by ſome of our celebrated writers, more worthy and more capable of executing it than myſelf.

II. The firſt duty either in defending truth or enquiring after it, is to be juſt; we will begin with acknowledging that the advocates for Chriſtianity have ſome reaſon to be apprehenſive for it, at leaſt as far as they ought to be for that which is not the production of man. It is not to be diſſembled that Chriſtianity is now-a-days indecently attacked in a great number of writings. It is true the manner in which it is commonly done, is ſufficient to ſatisfy thoſe who might be alarmed by the attack. The deſire to lay aſide all the reſtraint of paſſion, and the vanity of thinking different from the multitude, have made more unbelievers than the illuſions of ſophiſm, if indeed we are to include in the number of unbelievers all thoſe impious perſons who only wiſh to appear ſo, and, as Montaigne ſays, would fain be worſe than they are able. Such a ſhower of arrows ſhot from all ſides againſt Chriſtianity, has thrown ſome of our moſt pious writers into conſternation. Engaged to ſuſtain the cauſe and honour of religion,

which they believe to be in danger, because they see it outrageously beset, they lie in ambush, if I may so speak, to surprise infidelity in every new book, and it must be confessed, that they have found out a sad and plentiful crop: but some among them, like soldiers transported by an impetuosity of courage and ardour beyond their rank, expose themselves to be attacked in flank; and in the vehemence of their zeal and their researches, betray an indiscretion dangerous to their cause. When they have not been able to find real impieties, they have been obliged to forge imaginary ones, to have the honour of combating them. They have supposed intentions when crimes have been wanting, and have gone so far as to accuse silence itself.

"Socrates, said a Roman, I am attacked on account "of my words, because I am innocent in my actions." So might one of our philosophers say, I am attacked on account of my thoughts, because I am irreproachable in my words. Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, put to death one of his subjects who had conspired against him in a dream. There is seldom wanting a false zeal to carry injustice still further than credit or power. The tyrant punished dreams; the enemies of philosophy suppose them, demand the blood of the guilty, and it is but rare that they have not obtained it, to the shame of reason and humanity.

III. Nothing has been more common than the charge of irreligion brought against learned men by those who have no pretensions to philosophy. Pericles had scarce

ſcarce credit enough to ſave Anaxagoras, accuſed of atheiſm by the Athenian prieſts, for having pretended, that the univerſe was governed by one Supreme Intelligence, according to general and invariable laws. The aſhes of Socrates were ſtill ſmoaking, when Ariſtotle, being cited by fanatical enemies before the ſame judges, was forced to ſhun perſecution by flight. "We muſt not expoſe, ſays he, "philoſophy to a ſecond injury." The ſuperſtitious Athenians, who applauded the impiety of Ariſtophanes, ſuffered him to turn the objects of their worſhip into ridicule, and would not ſuffer any other to be ſubſtituted in their ſtead. No-body was forbid to ſpeak of the Divinity among the Greeks, but thoſe only who were capable of doing it worthily. But without riſing ſo high as the age of Anaxagoras, Socrates and Ariſtotle, let us confine ourſelves to what is paſſing in our own.

IV. The famous jeſuit Harduin, one of the firſt men of his age for the depth of his erudition, and one of the laſt for the ridiculous uſe he made of it, had once the extravagance to compoſe a piece on purpoſe to put under the ban of atheiſm, without ſhame or remorſe, reſpectable authors, many of whom had ſolidly proved the exiſtence of God in their writings; an abſurdity well worthy of a viſionary, who pretended that moſt of the beſt works of antiquity were compoſed by monks of the 13th century. This pious ſceptic in attacking, as he did, the certainty of almoſt all hiſtorical monuments, deſerved more than any man the name of an enemy to religion,

if his opinions had not been too ſtupid to have any followers. "His folly, ſays a celebrated writer, "takes away the heinouſneſs of his calumny; but "thoſe who repeat this calumny in our age, are "not always reckoned fools, and they are often very "dangerous." Naturally intolerant in their opinions, however indifferent they are in themſelves, theſe men ſeize with eagerneſs every thing which may ſerve for a pretext to render their opinions reſpectable. They want to connect with Chriſtianity the moſt contentious metaphyſical queſtions, and the moſt arbitrary ſyſtems of philoſophy. In vain does religion, ſo ſimple and preciſe as it is in its doctrines, reject conſtantly an alliance which diſhonours it; it is on account of this imaginary alliance that it has been imagined to have been attacked in thoſe works where there is not the leaſt ſuſpicion. Let us enter into a detail with relation to this point, and ſhew with what injuſtice the wiſeſt and moſt reſpectable philoſophers have been treated on a ſubject of ſuch importance.

V. Give me matter and motion and I will make a world, ſaid Deſcartes once, and after him one of his followers. This propoſition, which has been regarded as injurious to God, is, perhaps, the ſublimeſt thing which philoſophy has pronounced of the glory of the Supreme Being; a thought ſo profound and ſo great could only come from a great genius, who, on one ſide, perceived the neceſſity of an Almighty Intelligence to give exiſtence and impulſe to matter, and who perceived, on the other, the ſimplicity and

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the variety not leſs to be admired of the laws of motion; laws, by virtue of which the Creator has included all events in the firſt, as their ſeed, and need nothing to produce them but a *word*, according the ſublime language of Scripture. This is all that the propoſition of Deſcartes can mean, to one who is diſpoſed to underſtand it; but the enemies of reaſon, who only perceive the works of the Supreme Being in miniature, and who offer him a worſhip that is rigid, puſillanimous, and bounded like themſelves, diſcern nothing in the purer and ſublimer homage of philoſophy, but a proud fabricator of ſyſtems, who ſeems to wiſh to put himſelf in the place of the Divinity.

VI. The Newtonians admitted a vacuum and attraction; this was very near the phyſic of Epicurus; now this philoſopher was an atheiſt, and therefore the Newtonians muſt be the ſame; ſuch is the logic of one of their adverſaries. Notwithſtanding, it is true that no philoſophy is more favourable to the belief of the being of a God than Newton's. For how ſhould the particles of matter, which have no action themſelves, be able to tend towards one another, unleſs this tendency was excited by the Omnipotent will of a Sovereign Mover? A Carteſian atheiſt is one who is miſtaken in his principles; a Newtonian atheiſt would be ſomething worſe, a philoſopher who draws falſe concluſions.

VII. "When I lift up my eyes to heaven, ſaid an "impious man, I believe I ſee traces of the Divinity, "but when I look around me——" Look within you,

one might answer, and woe be to you if that proof is not sufficient. Indeed nothing else is necessary but to descend into ourselves, to discover the workmanship of a Sovereign Intelligence which has given us existence, and has preserved us in it. That existence is a prodigy which cannot strike us too much, because it is a continual one. It brings back to our mind every instance of a Supreme Power on which we depend. But the more sensible the impression of his acting is upon ourselves and all surrounding objects, the more inexcusable are we in seeking it in minute and frivolous objects. A learned man, of modern times, who was so persuaded of the existence of God, that he has investigated and given new proofs of it; nevertheless thought it is his duty to attack certain puerile, and even indecent arguments, by which certain authors have attempted to establish this great truth, but in reality have only injured and degraded it. This philosopher took those weapons out of the hands of atheists, which the weakness of these authors lent them; would one expect he should be charged with furnishing them? yet this is what those ignorant or treacherous censors have been so scandalous as to reproach him with. Thus the illustrous Boerhaave was once accused of Spinozism, because having heard that this system was badly attacked by some unknown person more orthodox, he asked him, if he had read what he was going to confute.

VIII. The same philosopher, too easily moved by the differences of certain scholastics about the arguments for the existence of God, has pretended, that the proofs

proofs, on which it reſts, are not, properly ſpeaking, demonſtrations; that they turn only upon very great probabilities, and that they derive their invincible force from their multitude and their union. We are far from believing that no proof of the being of God is rigorouſly demonſtrative, but we are not the more diſpoſed therefore to tax with atheiſm thoſe who think otherwiſe. The exiſtence of Cæſar is not demonſtrated like the theorems of geometry; is that a reaſon for entertaining the leaſt doubt about it? In an infinity of matters, many arguments may form in the mind, by their concurrence, a conviction as ſtrong as that which ſprings from demonſtration, tho' each particular in itſelf is only probable, as a concurrence of teſtimonies in the ſupport of a fact produces a certainty as irreverſible as that of geometry, though of a different kind. This is what Paſcal has before remarked on the proof of the being of God; and was Paſcal ever ſuſpected of doubting this truth? The enemies of that great man have ſaid, that it was a ſufficient anſwer to his 18 provincial letters to repeat 18 times that he was a heretic, but they never once dared to ſay that he was an atheiſt.

IX. Some writers have maintained that the explicit and diſtinct notion of the creation, is not to be found either in the Old or New Teſtament. This aſſertion has been attacked as impious; it would have been more natural to have diſcuſſed this point by an examination of the paſſages themſelves, and this examination would not have been difficult; but whatever ſide we take, it ſeems to me that faith has nothing

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to fear; this needs some explication. The creation, as the theologians themselves confess, is a truth which reason itself teaches, a necessary effect of the existence of a first Being. This notion then is of the number of those which revelation supposes, and upon which there is no occasion for it to speak in an express and particular manner. It is sufficient that the sacred books affirm nothing in contradiction to it. It is on this account we do not accuse them; and when some of the ancient Christian fathers, as it is pretended, did not express themselves with sufficient clearness on the subject of creation, is it a reason for believing they thought matter to be eternal?

X. The opinion which has been attributed to two or three fathers upon the nature of the soul, has raised the same clamour, and deserves the same answer. If we may believe different critics, those fathers had not very distinct ideas about the spirituality of the thinking principle, and seemed to have made it material. The pretension, however, of these critics, whether well or ill-founded, has furnished a handle to accuse them of that materialism they attribute to others; for, now-a-days, materialism, which we see every where the hydra, has seven heads to combat; but if two or three ecclesiastical writers have been in an error, which we do not pretend to determine, what has this mistake to do with religion? are the philosophical proofs for the spirituality of the soul less convincing? cannot we allow the full force to these proofs which Descartes first investigated and explained, and believe, that some of the fathers of the church were

were not acquainted with them? But, say they, those who maintain that the distinct idea of creation is not to be found in the Scripture, nor the spirituality of the soul in the ancient doctors, do it only because they pretend that the world is eternal, and the soul matter. If they pretend this, they ought to be convinced of the contrary, nothing is more necessary or more just; but it should seem not to be the likeliest way that can be chose to misrepresent them, especially when they acknowledge, as many have done in the most express terms, those two truths which they are charged with calling in question.

XI. It is not enough to stand up against impiety, we must not be mistaken in the kind of impiety we attack. "I am accused, said a Pyrrhonian one day, of "materialism. This is just as if a Constitutionary "should be accused of Jansenism; if I was to doubt, "it would rather be upon the existence of matter than "of thought. I know nothing of the former, but "from the equivocal report of my senses; and I know "the other by the infallible testimony of interior sen- "timent; my own thought assures me of the exist- "ence of a thinking principle. The idea which I "have of body and extension is much more uncertain "and obscure, and upon this object I only entertain "a reasonable scepticism. Thus instead of being a "materialist, I am inclined to deny the existence of "matter, at least such as my senses represent to me; "but it appears to me wiser to be silent and to "doubt."

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The name of materialiſt (I cannot help repeating it) is become now-a-days a kind of war-hoop; it is a qualification which is indiſcriminately applied to all kinds of unbelievers, and even to thoſe whom we want to ſtigmatize as ſuch. In all religions, and in all times, fanaticiſm has not plumed itſelf, either upon equity or juſtice: It has given to thoſe, whom it wanted to damn, not the names they deſerved, but thoſe which would do them moſt hurt: Thus, in the primitive times, the Pagans gave all Chriſtians the name of Jews.

XII. During the reign of the Ariſtotelian philoſophy, that is, for many ages, it was believed, that all our ideas came from the ſenſes; and it could not be imagined, that an opinion, ſo conformable to reaſon and experience, ſhould ever be regarded as dangerous. It was even forbid, on pain of death, to teach a contrary doctrine. The puniſhment was, it muſt be confeſſed, a little hard, whether our ideas are derived from ſenſe or not. It is right all the world ſhould live; but the prohibition and the penalty prove the religious attachment of our fathers to an antient opinion, "that "ſenſation is the ſource of all knowledge." Deſcartes came, and ſaid, "The ſoul is ſpiritual: Now, "what is a ſpiritual being without ideas? The ſoul "therefore has ideas from the inſtant its exiſtence "commences, that is, it has innate ideas." This reaſoning, joined to the attraction of a new opinion, ſeduced many ſchools; but they went farther than their maſter. From the ſpirituality of the ſoul, Deſcartes concluded innate ideas; one of his diſciples concluded

concluded more, that to deny innate ideas, was to deny the ſpirituality of the ſoul; perhaps they would have made innate ideas an article of faith, if they could have diſſembled, that this pretended truth was only diſcovered in the laſt century. We have ſeen theologians carry their extravagance ſo far, as to maintain, that the opinion, which unites our ideas to our ſenſations, endangers the myſtery of original ſin, and the grace of baptiſm. It is thus, that the moſt inconteſtable maxims in philoſophy and the mathematics have been attacked, under pretence of their ſeeming oppoſition with ſome doctrine of faith: Beſides, is it impoſſible to combat innate ideas, by the ſame weapons of religion which eſtabliſhed it? Muſt not an infant, who has the idea of God, as the Carteſians pretend, from the breaſt, and even from the womb, alſo know the duties owing to God, which is contrary to the firſt principles of religion and common ſenſe? Will any one ſay, the idea of God exiſts in infants, without being developed? But what are ideas which the ſoul poſſeſſes without knowing them, and the things which it knows without thought, and yet is obliged to learn afterwards, as much as if it had never known them? A ſpiritual being, ſome may ſay, muſt neceſſarily have ideas from the moment it exiſts. It is eaſy to anſwer, that this being, in the firſt moments of its exiſtence, may be confined to ſenſation; that a capacity of thinking is ſufficient to conſtitute it immaterial, ſince that power, by the confeſſion of all divines, belongs only to a ſpiritual ſubſtance. But further, to decide in what ſpirituality conſiſt,

consists, and whether it be the nature of a spiritual being to think, or even to perceive always, what distinct idea have we of the nature of the soul? Let us ask Malebranche, who will not be suspected of confounding mind with matter. In fine, it is by our senses that we have the knowledge of corporeal substance: It is therefore through their means, that we have been taught to regard it as incapable of will and sensation, and consequently of thought: From thence result two consequences; the first, that we owe to our sensations and reflections the knowledge we have of the immateriality of the soul; in the second place, that the idea we have of spirituality is negative, which teaches what a spiritual being is not, without informing us what it is; it would be presumption to think otherwise, and weakness to believe we must think otherwise to be orthodox.

The soul is neither matter nor extension, and yet it is something; though gross prejudice, fortified by habitude, leads us to judge, that what is not matter is nothing. See where philosophy conducts us, and where it leaves us!

XIII. That strange madness, of wishing to convert into doctrines the most groundless opinions concerning the soul, is not peculiar to our age. We will relate only a single example. Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, who got Gotheschale so well scourged at the council of Quercy, while it was proving that Gotheschale was blameable, procured the condemnation of one John Scot Erigones, who, among many real errors, maintained, that the soul was not in the body. It is difficult

ficult to conceive in what this pretended hereſy could conſiſt; for it is the property of the body only to be in one place rather than in another; and, if they had been as vigilant againſt materialiſm in the 9th century as at preſent, John Scot would have had a good chance for accuſing his adverſary. The ſoul is united to the body in a manner altogether unknown to us, and inexplicable by all the dark metaphyſics of the ſchools; but, in the time of Hincmar, they were too ignorant to know how to doubt.

XIV. If the philoſopher, always obliged to expreſs himſelf clearly, ought not to allow himſelf any improper expreſſions on ſo delicate a ſubject, he ought not to condemn too lightly, and without explication, equivocal expreſſions on a ſubject which is likewiſe ſo obſcure, and which gives us ſuch little hold to reaſoning and to language: For example, an author, who ſhould ſay now-a-days, that the ſoul "is eſſentially the ſubſtantial form of the human body," would at leaſt be ſuſpected of materialiſm. Nevertheleſs, whoever ſhould advance ſuch a propoſition, would only repeat the firſt canon of the general council of Vienna. The truth is, the word *form* is a vague term, to which the fathers of the council undoubtedly applied a catholic ſenſe, and conſequently, we may be permitted to uſe it, if we fix the ſame ſenſe to it.

In a modern work this canon is mentioned and explained, to prevent the abuſe the materialiſts of our days might make of it. This apologiſt might repent him of his zeal, if a good action ſhould be repented of;

of; for, notwithstanding the serious and simple tone of his defence, he has been foolishly accused of an intention to turn into ridicule the doctrine of the œcumenic council.

XV. This is not the only example of equivocal expressions used differently in the schools, or even adopted now-a-days by whole sects of philosophers. Malebranche, and his disciples, called God, the Universal Being. The Spinozists would not express themselves otherwise. The Scotists allow God to be extended, eternal, immense, immoveable, indivisible; and it is only by involving themselves in an obscure jargon, that they defend their making him corporeal, or at least extended: Nevertheless, it would be unjust to accuse Malebranche of Spinozism, or the Scotists of confounding God with space. Why should not the same indulgence be shewn to men as little inclined to deceive as they? And it is the more equitable, as there is no subject where an intention to injure finds more plausible pretences of exerting itself, than religion. Expressions that are innocent in themselves, or in the sense affixed to them by their author, are often made susceptible of an erroneous or dangerous sense, especially when separated from that which goes before, and that which follows. To convince us of this, it is sufficient to cast our eyes upon the innumerable abuses, which error has made of Scripture expressions.

XVI. The metaphysical opinions of the philosophers have not been the object of a thousand declamations only, their systems too, concerning the formation and arrangement

rangement of the univerſe, have met with the ſame fate. Matter is not eternal; it muſt have begun therefore to exiſt; here is a point where we may differ: Has God ranged in order the different particles of matter from the time that he created them, or was it a greater or leſſer time that chaos continued, before the ſeparation of the particles? here philoſophers may be divided. Indeed, if there be nothing in body but figure and motion, as ſound philoſophy intimates, what difficulty is there in ſuppoſing, that the Supreme Being, after creating matter, and forming it inſtantly into a ſingle, homogeneous maſs, apparently ſhapeleſs, ſhould impreſs upon its different particles that movement, which is neceſſary to ſeparate, or bring them to one another, and produce by this means different bodies; and that light, ſtars, animals, and plants, ſpring from this great operation, the work of the eternal Geometrican, in that ſucceſſion and time the Creator preſcribed? This grand and noble idea, ſo far from being a contradiction to divine power and goodneſs, ſerves to diſplay them before our eyes. Beſides, the exiſtence of chaos, before the ſeparation of its particles, is an hypotheſis neceſſary to the phyſical explanation of the formation of the terreſtrial globe.

The Supreme Being had power, at the ſame inſtant, to create and arrange the world, without having forbid the philoſopher from inquiring, in what manner he might have produced it in a longer time, and by virtue of laws of motion eſtabliſhed by the Author of nature. The ſyſtem of this philoſopher may be more

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or leſs conſiſtent with phænomena, but the naturaliſt, not the theologian, muſt judge him. Thus the Newtonians, to explain the figure of the earth, ſuppoſed that it was originally a fluid. Thus Deſcartes thought it once a ſun, obſcured by a thick cruſt which covered it; an hypotheſis which has occaſioned as much pitiable chicanery among divines, as ſolid objections among philoſophers.

XVII. No natural philoſopher now-a-days doubts, that the ſea has covered a great part of the earth. It appears impoſſible to attribute ſolely to the deluge all the veſtiges which remain of ſo antient an inundation; this opinion has been attacked, as contrary to Scripture: We need only open the book of Geneſis, to ſee how unjuſt ſuch an imputation is, "On the third "day God ſaid, let the waters aſſemble together in one "place; and there was dry land." Has this paſſage any need of a commentary? Perhaps we might find, in the ſame chapter, proofs of the exiſtence of chaos before the formation of the world, if we had not already obſerved it is of no conſequence to religion, provided that we do not maintain the eternity of chaos. But we cannot omit, without cenſure, on this occaſion, the bad judgment of a modern critic. The illuſtrious hiſtorian of the academy of ſciences, in one of his extracts, ſaid, that fiſh were the firſt inhabitants of our globe: The cenſor inveighs with all his might againſt the impiety, not believing that he had Scripture for his voucher. Conſult Geneſis, and we find, that he either wants honeſty or memory, for we there read,

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that fish were in reality the first animals that were created.

XVIII. No person is ignorant, that the passage in the book of Joshua, which has been both injudiciously attacked and defended, was the cause of Galileo's misfortunes. "Wherefore, say your quick geniuses, did Joshua "order the sun to stand still, instead of commanding "the earth? What difficulty could there be for an "author, who pretends to be inspired, to describe "things as they really are? Why should the Holy "Spirit, which dictated the Scriptures, lead us into "a physical error, while it clears up our duty?" "You ought to believe, answer the inquisitors on "the other hand, that the sun turns round the earth; "the Holy Spirit, which ought to know, assures you "of it, and it cannot deceive you." One might reply to them both, that, in indifferent matters, the Scripture makes use of the language of the people. But this answer is not sufficient; it seems to me, that, in order to confound the impiety of one side, and the weakness of the other, we should add, that the Scripture must speak the language of the people, in order to be understood; that a missionary, preaching among savages in this manner, "I announce to you, "that God, who makes the earth we inhabit roll "round the sun," would engage no attention to his discourse. It is necessary for us to hold another kind of language to induce them to hear us; we must imitate, in some measure, the example of him, who had recourse to a fable to dispose the Athenians to listen to him. In a word, we should first of all make them Christians;

Chriſtians; and afterwards, if we pleaſe, or if we can, make them aſtronomers. When they are ſuch, they will not ſeek for ſyſtems of the world in ill-underſtood paſſages of Scripture; and, in forming their opinions, they will prefer the obſervatory, to the holy office. They will be like the king of Spain, who, as Paſcal informs us, choſe rather to believe the antipodes on the authority of Columbus, who came from thence, than reject them, on account of pope Zechariah, who never had been there. Let us reſpect Scripture ſo as never to uſe it profanely; and let us leave madam Dacier to juſtify the talking of Achilles's horſes in Homer, by the diſcourſe of Balaam's aſs.

XIX. Opinions purely metaphyſical, and ſyſtems concerning the formation of the world, have not furniſhed the only pretences for arraigning philoſophers; calumny has neglected nothing that might conduce to the ſame purpoſe. Can one refrain from ſentiments of pity or indignation, to ſee one of our moſt celebrated writers accuſed of impiety by journaliſts, for having ſaid, that Jordan is but a ſmall river, that Paleſtine was, at the time of the cruſades, what it is now, one of the moſt barren countries of Aſia?

Critics accumulate paſſages of Scripture to prove, that it was very fertile in Joſhua's days: But what do all theſe paſſages prove of this place in the time of Saladin, or of its preſent ſtate? Why may not God have avenged the death of Chriſt, by turning its riches and abundance into ſterility? Or rather, (for the ſimpleſt explanations are always the beſt) why

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may not a country, enſlaved and unpeopled, become barren by that very depopulation? But, when they are determined to make a writer ſuſpected, every-thing is impiety in his lips; his proofs of the being of God are treated as ſophiſms, his arguments in favour of religion, as pleaſantries levelled againſt it. Let him write againſt ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm, it is Chriſtianity he aims at: Does he plead for the civil toleration of every religion, it is only to ſhew his indifference to all.

XX. Give me, ſaid Fontenelle, in his hiſtory of oracles, but half a dozen men who are capable of being perſuaded, that it is not the ſun which makes the day, and I will not deſpair of bringing all nations, by their means, into the ſame belief. If any-thing in the world is inconteſtable, it is aſſuredly this propoſition, of which the abſurd religions of Aſia and Africa furniſh but too melancholy and ſtriking a proof. What have the cenſors of the hiſtory of oracles made of this? "Why it only wanted half a dozen more, ſay "they, to make it an impious aſſertion." The impiety, however, is intirely their own; for, if half a dozen were capable of ſeducing mankind into error, does it follow, that twelve different perſons could not lead them into truth? In what reſpects can the many juſt and ſolid obſervations, which have been made in modern times, upon prejudice, credulity, falſe prophecies, and falſe miracles, affect thoſe invincible arguments by which true religion is ſupported?

XXI. The fathers of the church, the firſt defenders of Chriſtianity, did not diſtruſt in this manner the good-

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neſs of their cauſe. They were not afraid of objections, nor open day; they were ignorant of falſe attacks, and puſillanimous precautions. Many writers of our days, worthy to follow them in ſo noble a career, have imitated their example; but if the reſpectable cauſe of the goſpel has had its Paſcals and Boſſuets, it has likewiſe had its Chaumeiux and its Garaſſe's.

XXII. The abuſe of criticiſm in religious matters is pernicious to religion itſelf on many accounts;—for the diſingenuity and trifling with which a good cauſe is ſometimes defended;—for the conſequences drawn by the multitude from the vague charge of irreligion brought againſt the philoſophers,—for the motives which have induced men, pretendedly good, to declare war againſt reaſon;—in ſhort, from the little union, and reciprocal animoſity, of its adverſaries; each of theſe objects merits a ſeparate article, and we will devote a few moments to them.

XXIII. The Encyclopedia will furniſh us with the ſubject of the firſt article. Under ſubſtantial forms we mentioned the argument of the Carteſians againſt the ſouls of beaſts, drawn from this principle of St. Auſtin, that, "under a juſt God, no creature could ſuffer, "who had not deſerved it;" an argument well known in the ſchools, which Malebranche has availed himſelf of with much force; and which ſenſible philoſophers and divines have always looked upon as very difficult to confute. In explaining this argument, it was remarked at the ſame time, that this was at moſt an objection, which ought not to hurt

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these proofs, there are of the spirituality of the soul, of its immortality, and of Divine justice and providence.

What has one of the adversaries of the Encyclopedia made of this? He has pretended, that the only design of this article was to ridicule this principle of St. Austin; and to prove it, they have concluded from the principle, that he looked upon brutes as machines, an opinion very far from the good doctor's thoughts, and the honour of which solely belongs to his pretended apologist. Thus it is not the Encyclopedia, but its ridiculous adversary, who accuses one of the most respectable fathers of the church of absurdities and false conclusions, and in this manner it is that religion is defended. According to this new apostle, it is not possible to be Christians without believing brutes to be machines. Thus from St. Peter, to Descartes, there have been no Christians. But this writer astonishes us with equal absurdities, when he pretends, that moral duties are not known by reason, and that the existence of the body is a truth of revelation, and maintains, in short, against unbelievers, that the soul is of its own nature immortal; a proposition which is blasphemous, since it robs the Supreme Intelligence of one of his most essential attributes. The uncreated Being alone is of his essence immortal. Our soul exists only by the will of this Being, who thinks proper to give it an eternal existence, which it receives every instant by a continual creation. It is not by the dissolution of the parts that the soul ceases to be as the body does; it

is in relapsing into that non-entity, from whence the author of nature drew it, and to which it is liable every instant to return. These are the first elements of Christian metaphysics, which the author ought to have been instructed in before he wrote. It must be a sad and humbling circumstance to be obliged to learn this doctrine of those very persons whom he taxes with denying them.

XXIV. Those who exercise their critical talents with most violence, and consequently with indiscretion, assume sometimes the air of moderation, when they are sure of attacking with advantage. I know not by what fatality the champions of Christianity have acted otherwise, and supported the interest of God with injurious malignity. They have this disadvantage, that they prejudice the reader against the advocates of religion, they exasperate, and consequently alienate those minds which would be reconciled by moderation; in short, they hinder the critic from bestowing upon the arguments all the regard and attention that is due to them. When they content themselves, for example, as enthusiasts sometimes do, with saying of atheists, that they are not honest, and that atheism has its source only in libertinism, this undoubtedly may be true in general; but have they any reason to expect to make proselytes by these means? Although the interest we have in denying a truth may render our unbelief suspected, this interest is not a sufficient reason for being condemned, when better proofs may be offered. The more a wise man examines the evidence of God's existence, the more intelli-

intelligence will he derive from thence, and the more ought he to be in a diſpoſition to offer him a reaſonable worſhip, the only one which truly honours him, and which is one of the firſt of his precepts.

The beſt method of maintaining that atheiſts cannot be honeſt, is to prove, with the greateſt clearneſs, the truth they oppoſe. Let us not imitate a modern writer, who began with advancing that there were no infidels, and ended with refuting them; beſides, of what ſignification to truth are the motives of thoſe who deny it? what, does it contribute towards conviction to diſallow our adverſaries probity and good faith? This is imitating the ſchoolmaſter in the fable, who ſcolded the boy for drowning himſelf, and made an harangue before he would ſave him. Can it be denied, in ſhort, that many philoſophers, ancient and modern, accuſed of atheiſm or ſcepticiſm, have been, in appearance at leaſt, irreproachable in their conduct, and ſhewn themſelves as regular in their manners, as blind and inconcluſive in their opinions? "Strike, but hear," ſaid Themiſtocles to Eurebiades; one might ſay to theſe pretended champions of religion, "ſtrike, but reaſon." Alas! it is to be feared ſuch wiſe and prudent advice as this might be repeated a long while without effect. Exceſs in every thing is the element of man; his nature is to be paſſionate upon all ſubjects which engage him; moderation is to him a ſtate of violence; it is only through conſtraint or reflexion that he ſubmits, and when the importance of the cauſe he defends, ſerves for a pretext to his animoſity, he abandons himſelf to it with-

out decency or remorse. Has false zeal then forgot that the Gospel has two precepts equally indispensable, the love of God, and our neighbour? and does it imagine that the best way of keeping the first is by violating the second?

XXV. The defence of Christianity has not only been prejudiced by aspersions, but by the nature of the accusations, and the character of the accused. The more heinous it is to propogate irreligion, the more criminal it is to accuse others of so doing who are innocent; in this case particularly, it is more necessary that we judge of men by what they have written, than by what they are unjustly suspected of having thought, or intended to say. Faith is the gift of God, which is not to be procured of ourselves *, and all that society ordains, is to respect this precious gift in those who have the happiness to enjoy it; it belongs to men to judge of discourse, and to God, of the heart. Thus the charge of irreligion, especially when brought before the public, cannot be supported by proofs too convincing and notorious. But this precaution, so equitable in itself, is still more necessary when a celebrated writer is attacked, whose name is sufficient to give weight to his opinions, even to those he is

* If he means by faith the belief of the Christian religion in general, it is to be procured of ourselves by the exercise of common candour, like the belief of any historical event or moral truth; but if he means the belief of some doctrines of human invention, falsly ascribed to Christianity, he may call it supernatural, if he pleases.

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falsely accused of. What advantage did religion derive from the imputations and invectives so often cast upon the illustrious author of the Spirit of Laws? On the one hand, they have not been able to convict him of having meant the least injury to the Gospel, of which he speaks with the greatest respect throughout his work: on the other, the infidels have gloried in a chief so generously given them; they have accepted with gratitude this present, and the name of Montesquieu has been more serviceable to them, than the pretended blows he is accused of levelling against Christianity. Authority is the great argument of the multitude; and infidelity, said a man of genius, is the faith of libertines. After so many writings and pious railings against the author of the Spirit of Laws, the sensible defenders of religion, who at first kept silence, at length broke it (perhaps a little too late) to vindicate this philosopher themselves. They felt the weight of a name which they had opposed, and did not forget to blot it out of the list of miscreants, where it had been rashly placed.

XXVI. Should we wish to know one of the principal causes of this declared war against philosophers: The divines of France are divided into two parties, who have long detested and tore one another in pieces for the glory of God, and the good of the church and state. The weakest of the two, after exhausting all that malice or calumny could invent to defeat their adversaries, concluded with taxing them of indifference towards the doctrines of the Gospel, attacked every day in innumerable writings. Sensible of this re-

proach, and piqued in honour, they seem to have united with the weaker to fall foul upon all infidels indiscriminately, whether real or supposed. This offensive alliance ought naturally to have put a stop to the war that has been kindled in the bosom of the Gallican church above these 100 years, but, unhappily for religion, it does not produce this effect, and one cannot say, on this occasion, "facti sunt amici ex ipsa die;" on the contrary, this declared war against the common enemy, has only furnished the two parties with a new pretext for reviling one another with the more fury and scandal; a late striking example will be a sad proof of what we now advance: there appeared last year a work famous for a great number of editions and criticisms that were made upon it, which we condemn, with the author, as far as they are found worthy of censure. The Journalists of Trevoux, who have enjoyed the privilege of abusing every-thing under the name of irreligion, whether it mentioned it or no, made a very brisk attack upon this work in their vulgar dogmatical style, and have endeavoured even to lessen the talents of this author; but in this last respect, indeed, they must permit us to be of a different opinion from them; matters of taste and philosophy are a profane sort of knowledge, in which they dare not pique themselves with being infallible. Divinity is their fort, and yet it is a province which good men now contest with them. However, these journalists enjoyed their victory peaceably, till a periodical concealed writer, a more declared enemy to them than

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even to the infidel, came to make his charge in his turn againſt the ſame book, which had been ſo zealouſly and largely attacked already. But it happened that the blows of this new bruiſer fall much heavier upon the journaliſts than the work itſelf. "Behold, ſays he, the effects of the abominable morality "of the caſuiſts, behold the doctrine of the Caſnedis, "the Tamborins, the Berruyers and their brethren, "conſecrated in this pernicious production." The reaſonable men, on the other hand, exclaim in their turn: "See the brethren of the Caſnedis, the Tam-"borins, and the Berruyers, well recompenced for "their zeal and religion, avenged in a very edifying "manner." Indeed, if theſe critics accuſe one another of being in the principles of the author condemned, one of them muſt neceſſarily be diſhoneſt; let us not think of taxing them in common, and deciding their quarrel like the proceſs of the wolf and the fox before the ape.

XXVII. When we ſee the author of a libel, twenty times diſgraced by the magiſtrate, declaim againſt infidels, we cannot help thinking of Calvin, who burnt Servetus. But fanatics are always auſtere; in accuſing the perſon who differs from them in opinion of irreligion, they give themſelves an air of zeal, which is always agreeable to partymen; they have the ſatisfaction of calumniating government, which is indifferent to them, in compariſon of what they call the cauſe of God, which is in reality their own. However, this may be ſaid with confidence, if thoſe are to be puniſhed who do moſt harm to Chriſtianity, fanatics

ought much rather to be suppressed than infidels. What idea must the people form of religion when they see its ministers anathematizing each other, till authority forces them to that silence which charity itself ought to prescribe? Don't we believe, that the scandalous disputes of divines of our days, upon matters often futile, and always unintelligible, have not done more mischief to Christianity, than the feeble reasonings of the impious? Why shall they not produce the same effect upon the deists, which the quarrels of the Dominicans did upon the emperor of China? "These men, says he, are come "5000 leagues to preach to us a doctrine upon "which they are not agreed themselves." In fine, what can have a greater tendency to stumble the weak, and make irreligion triumph, than so many contradictory works as we have seen accumulated in these later times upon grace, the character of the true church, and miracles? The public, at last, has contented itself with being ignorant of these works, and despising their authors; and they, in revenge for not being read, have attacked those who are.

XXVIII. Let us plead, as much as lies in our power, in favour of humanity and philosophy, against their unjust complaints. Facts will suffice without reasonings, and, perhaps, will have greater force. Open ecclesiastical history, which is always so useful to the Christian and the philosopher; to the Christian, to animate him by examples of virtue, and the accomplishments of the divine Promises, in spite of the opposition of all the powers of the earth; to the philosopher

loſopher, by the incredible and numberleſs monuments it preſents to him of human extravagance, and the evils which fanaticiſm has produced. We might ſhew, by a detail of theſe evils, how government has intereſted itſelf in defending and ſupporting men of letters, who, being convinced of the true doctrines of the faith, have had the juſtice and the equity to ſeparate what did not belong to it. It is, indeed, to them that ſovereigns owe the confirmation of their power, and the deſtruction of a tribe of abſurd opinions, hurtful to the ſtate; on the contrary, it is by confounding thoſe objects with religion which are foreign to it, that the people have groaned ſo long under the temporal power of eccleſiaſtics, that excommunications, thoſe reſpectable arms of the church, have been laviſhed to ſupport rights purely human, and often ill-founded; that the ſon of Charlemain, as a ſlave rather than a Chriſtian, underwent ten times, ſucceſſively, the ignominy of a public penitence, which ſome biſhop had the aſſurance to command him, and which he merited only by the baſeneſs of ſubmitting to it*; that an œcumenique council, in the

* In 822 and 823 Lewis, who was called the Debonnair, but who much better deſerved the appellation of the Weak, ſubmitted to a public penance at Attigny and Soiſſons; the firſt time, for putting to death his nephew who had revolted againſt him; the ſecond time, for not receiving the law from his children. "The "biſhops, who impoſed this penance, pretended, that it was not "lawful for him to reſume the royal dignity. St. Ambroſe did

the age of ſervitude and ignorance, durſt not openly proteſt againſt the deſigns of an audacious pontiff, who imagined he had a right to deprive an emperor of his patrimony*; that one of our kings, to expiate

" not draw ſuch conſequences from the penitence of Theodoſius; " will any one ſay, that that great Saint wanted courage to avail " himſelf of the authority of the church, or that he was leſs " wiſe than the biſhops of the ninth century? Theſe biſhops, " much more hardened, declared themſelves againſt Lewis the " Debonnair, in favour of his children, and ſtirred up that civil " war which ruined the empire of France. Specious pretexts " were not wanting; Lewis was a weak prince, governed by his " ſecond wife; the empire was in diſorder; but they ſhould have " had ſome regard to conſequences, and not pretend to expoſe a " monarch to the ſame penance as a ſimple monk." The two penances of this prince, eſpecially the laſt, which he deſerved the leaſt, were attended with the moſt mortifying circumſtances. Ebbon, archbiſhop of Rheims, who had dared to degrade his maſter, was indeed depoſed the year after, but the emperor was diſhonoured.

* In 1245, at the firſt general council of Lyons, pope Innocent IV. publicly depoſed, in the preſence of the council, Frederic II. all the fathers holding a lighted candle, which he regarded as a tacit approbation, but very unjuſtly; for it is evident, as M. Fleury obſerves, that this depoſition was not made with the approbation of the council, as other decrees. But, ſay the Proteſtants, why the candle and their ſilence? To this objection it is anſwered, that the greateſt part of the eccleſiaſtics were, in general, of the opinion, that the popes had power over the temporal

piate the crime of burning 1300 eccleſiaſtics, took the reſolution of killing 100,000 perſons in Syria to ſhew his penitence*; that fools have plundered their own families to enrich ignorant and uſeleſs monks; that the ridiculous controverſies of the Greeks upon abſurdities, have haſtened the deſtruction of their empire†; that uncertain and cruel proofs were regarded as

temporal kings, but that God did not permit that this opinion ſhould be confirmed by a poſitive ſuffrage of the œcumenic council; and the ſilence of the church aſſembled, is not always a mark of approbation, eſpecially in matters not expreſsly relative to the faith.

* It is well known that the abbe Suger, as great a ſtateſman as the abbe de la Clarivaux was an orator, oppoſed this unfortunate croiſade, which Lewis the Young undertook by the advice of St. Bernard. The event juſtified the fears of the miniſter, and confuted the promiſes of the preacher. Lewis took up the croſs to conquer Paleſtine, and drive out the Saracens, his expedition ended in divorcing his wife at his return, and loſing, by that means, Poitou and Guienne. In vain did St. Bernard wiſh to juſtify himſelf, by imputing to the ſins of the warrior the miſcarriage of that enterprize; he forgot that the firſt croiſade was more ſucceſsful, though its champions were not more worthy of ſucceſs, and he did not ſee, ſays M. Fleury, that a proof is never concluſive, which is not always ſo.

† About the middle of the 14th century, certain weak monks of Mount Athos, whoſe brains were turned by long and frequent faſtings, imagined they ſaw upon their navel the light of Mount Tabor, and ſpent their time in contemplating it, a moſt

as the judgments of God, the consequence of which was often the condemnation of the innocent, and the acquittal of the guilty *; that one of the richest parts

deplorable heresy! They pretended further, that this light was uncreated, being no other than God himself. Barlaam, their adversary, still more ridiculous than they in giving them a serious answer, had credit to get an assembly convened at Constantinople against these visionaries, little aware that he himself should be condemned there; however, this was the consequence.—The emperor Andronicus Paleologus harangued the pretended council with so much vehemence that he died a few hours afterwards, an exit worthy an emperor. It was this Andronicus Paleologus who abandoned the sea-coast of his dominion to ruin, because he was assured that God was so well satisfied with his zeal for the church, that his enemies durst not attack him. The same emperor regretted the time, which the management of his affairs stole from theological debates. The quarrel of the Greeks about the light of Tabor, lasted till the destruction of the empire, and continued with violence while Bajazet was besieging Constantinople. All these ridiculous controversies, in which the emperors took part, hastened their downfal, in making them neglect the government.

* One may read in a great number of works a detail of these sort of proofs, and the reasons why they were abolished; all sorts of questions were generally decided in this manner: they went so far as to throw two missals into the fire, to try which was the best; the most extraordinary event, and the least expected by them, happened on this occasion, they were both burnt. A Clerk of Provence submitted himself to the fiery trial, to prove a revelation

parts of the world has been depopulated by monſters, who put the inhabitants to death by puniſhing them into converſion; that one half of our nation has been bathed in the blood of the other; in fine, that the ſtandard of rebellion has been put into the hands of ſubjects againſt their ſovereigns, and a ſword into the hand of ſovereigns againſt their ſubjects*. It is by the light of philoſophy that we have been delivered from ſo many evils. A few intrepid men

velation which he ſaid he had of the diſcovery of the holy ſpear. The prieſt died. The event would always have been equally uniform in all trials, if they had been honeſtly managed; but in ages of ignorance, as well as others, there are men who know how to cheat.

* We cannot conclude theſe notes better than by a paſſage of M. Fleury. "It is melancholy, I am very ſenſible, to relate "theſe unedifying facts, — but the foundation of hiſtory is "truth. There are two ſorts of perſons who are diſpleaſed with "the relation of theſe things; the firſt are the profane politi- "cians, who, not knowing true religion, confound it with falſe; "they are afraid of diminiſhing its reſpect in the minds of the "people, that is to ſay, according to them, of undeceiving "them. I will not diſpute with theſe politicians. One ought to "begin with inſtructing and converting them; but I ought to "ſatisfy, if poſſible, thoſe ſcrupulous good men, who, through "a miſtaken zeal, fall into the ſame misfortune of ſhuddering "where there is no danger to be apprehended. What are you "afraid of, I would ſay? of finding out the truth? Do you love "then to remain in error, at leaſt in ignorance? and can you "ſtay there with ſafety, you who ought to inſtruct others?"

have

have sometimes dared, at the peril of their liberty, their fortunes, and their lives, to open the eyes of subjects and kings. The gratitude which they have a right to demand of our age, ought to be estimated by the importance of the services they have rendered, and the most real effect of this gratitude is in the protection which ought to be given to their successors. This protection, we can say with pleasure, finds fewer obstacles every day, in proportion as the spirit of philosophy, which spreads continually, communicates itself to the more sound and wise part of the divines, and renders them more indulgent, or more equitable in matters which are not their object. We do not live in those times, when it was a crime to teach any other philosophy than Aristotle; with a little more ignorance and authority it had been made a law of the state, as it is still among our neighbouring nations *.

XXIX. We need but cast our eyes upon those unhappy nations, who are victims to so ridiculous a law, to convince us of the sad effects which arise from fear,

* Our fathers saw but little more in 1624, when, at the request of the university, and especially of the Sorbonne, it was forbid by an arret of parliament, "on pain of death to hold or "teach any maxim contrary to ancient and approved authors, "or to enter into any debate but such as should be approved "by the doctors of the faculty of theology." By the same arret several persons who had composed and published theses against the doctrine of Aristotle, were either reprimanded or banished.

and

and the impoſſibility of being inſtructed. Will poſterity believe it of our days, that there was printed in one of the capital cities of Europe, a work with this title, Syſtema Ariſtotelicum de formis ſubſtantialibus & accedentibus abſolutis, 1750? will they not imagine it was a miſtake of the preſs, and that it ought to be read 1550? Such, however, in the midſt of the eighteenth century, is the deplorable ſtate of reaſon, in one of the fineſt regions of the earth, in a nation otherwiſe refined and polite; while the ſciences are making ſuch progreſs in England, France and the Proteſtant part of Germany. I ſay the Proteſtant part; for we muſt acknowledge, with ſorrow, the preſent ſuperiority of the univerſities of that party to the Catholic ſchools. It is ſo ſtriking, that ſtrangers, travelling in thoſe places, and paſſing from a Catholic univerſity to a neighbouring Proteſtant one, cannot help thinking, they have removed 400 leagues or lived 400 years; that they have got from Salamanca to Cambridge, or from the age of Scotus to that of Newton. We make this remark with the more freedom, as the difference of light and knowledge in theſe regions cannot be aſcribed to their different religions.

In France, where the Catholic doctrine is followed and reſpected, the ſciences are cultivated with great ſucceſs. In Italy itſelf they are not neglected; doubtleſs for this reaſon, becauſe the ſovereign pontiffs, for the moſt part ſenſible and wiſe, and knowing the abuſes which ſpring from ignorance, can more readily ſuppreſs in Italy the tyranny of ſubaltern inquiſitors, where it is neceſſary; for every thing ſerves as a pre-

text to this contemptible and mischievous wretches to extinguish light, and obstruct the progress of the mind.

XXX. It seems to me, that one way of reducing their dominion in those unfortunate countries where they happen still to rule, is to encourage, as much as possible, the study of the demonstrative sciences. Princes who govern these people, and would have them shake off the yoke of superstition and ignorance, encourage the increase of mathematicians among them. This will produce philosophers in time. The most delicate orthodoxy has no contention with geometry. Those who believe they have an interest in keeping the mind in darkness, should they be foresighted enough to know the effect of the progress of this science, would want a pretext for hindering its spreading. The study of geometry will soon lead to that of sound physics, and this to true philosophy, which, by the light it will diffuse all around, will soon rise superior to all the efforts of superstition; for these efforts, however great, become quite useless when a nation is once enlightened.

XXXI. It is doing injury to religion, to endeavour to support it by ignorance. The provinces of philosophers and divines are like those of the spiritual and temporal powers; nothing can be better distinguished than the respective rights of each; but as sometimes the spiritual power, having shook off the temporal yoke which oppressed it, is willing to oppress in its turn: so some ministers of religion, after emerging from the darkness which an insolent philosophy endeavoured to throw over them, have been willing, in their turn, to lock in this philosophy within the bounds which religion

gion preſcribes. Their ſeveral rights appear, at this time of day, too well fixed, too well underſtood and determined, to have any thing to fear from each other's attacks. It is their intereſt to be united, as it is for two powerful princes to be upon amicable terms; and if, on the one hand, Chriſtianity, being ſupported by divine and human laws, be eſtabliſhed on the moſt durable foundation; on the other, there is room to believe, that the philoſophers of the eighteenth century, while they juſtly reſpect the doctrines of faith, will defend their intereſts with more force and advantage than the princes of the twelfth century defended their crowns.

XXXII. This is the ſubſtance of the reflections which ſeemed proper to be made at this time of day, upon criticiſm in points of religion. I doubt not but they will be approved, when they are examined without prejudice, and with the light of ſound philoſophy. I believe I am ſufficiently fortified againſt the attacks of weak and hypocritical fanatics; but with regard to perſons who are prejudiced againſt me out of a ſincere, but miſtaken, zeal, I ſhall reſpect the cauſe, without dreading or approving the effect of it; and content myſelf with replying in the words of Cicero,

Iſtos homines ſine contumelia dimittamus, ſunt enim & boni viri et quoniam ita ipſi ſibi videntur, beati.

AN

AN ESSAY UPON THE ALLIANCE BETWIXT LEARNED MEN, AND THE GREAT.

Sine ira et ſtudio quorum cauſas procul habeo. TACIT.

To M. L' Abbe De Canaye, of the royal academy of inſcription and belle letters.

Accept, my good friend, the fruits of our philoſophical converſations, in which you are equally concerned with myſelf. To whom can I preſent them with more propriety than to you, whoſe example ſo well ſhews, how happily one may live without the great, and whoſe company how eaſily they may be diſpenſed with? Whatever pains I may have taken in this eſſay, to ſpeak the truth in a manner the leaſt offenſive, conſiſtent with integrity, I cannot hope to pleaſe all the world: However, men of letters will admire my courage, honeſt men will applaud me, and you will love me the more.

THERE are no people who have not continued a long time in a ſtate of barbariſm, or rather of ignorance: for it is not yet decided whether they are ſynonymous expreſſions or not. Our own nation, from an infinity of cauſes which are no leſs dangerous to explain, than eaſy to perceive, remained many ages buried under the profoundeſt ignorance.

This indeed was not to be lamented, if we may credit ſome philoſophers, who pretend to aſcribe the depravation of human nature to the influence of knowledge.

For,

For, as this enlightened age is corrupt, thoſe philoſophers conclude, that it is the conſequence and effect of the progreſs of ſcience. If they had lived in thoſe periods which we call barbarous, they would then have regarded ignorance as the enemy of virtue. The wiſe man, who calmly contemplates all ages as well as his own, diſcerns among all mankind a pretty near reſemblance.

Be this as it will, our day is at laſt come; but, as the night has continued long, the twilight and the dawn have been long alſo. Charles V. (one of the wiſeſt, and, conſequently, one of the greateſt of princes who ever reigned, though leſs celebrated than a mob of kings who have been only fortunate or powerful) made ſome efforts to revive in his dominions a taſte for the ſciences. He had undoubtedly the wiſdom to perceive, in the midſt of the troubles which diſturbed his reign, that the cultivation of letters was one of the moſt infallible means of ſecuring the tranquillity of a monarchy, for a reaſon which, on the contrary, may render them pernicious to republics, becauſe, when purſued too far, there is an attraction attending them which engroſſes mens attention, and makes them cold to every other object.

His ſucceſſors, either too ignorant, or too deſpotic, ſeemed to neglect the wiſe views of Charles: But the original movement, though enfeebled, ſtill ſubſiſted till the time of Francis I. who gave to languiſhing genius a new impulſe. This prince was happily born with a diſpoſition to love men of learning, or at leaſt with a diſcernment that led him to protect them:

them: for we may defend them without loving them; and intereſt or vanity often make men dupes with reſpect to the motives of their regards for them. Their gratitude, in return, to this monarch was without paralel. Men of letters, like the people, think themſelves indebted to princes for the leaſt privileges; and (what is truly memorable in the hiſtory of genius and the human heart) the title of Father of letters contributed more to efface the innumerable faults of Francis I. than the more reſpectable name of Father of his people availed to cancel thoſe of Lewis XII. Hiſtory ſeems to have placed the firſt of theſe two kings in the ſame rank with his rival in glory, Charles V. who, though greatly his ſuperior in abilities, could not engage ſo many pens in his praiſe, and who neglected the vanity of being the idol of learned men, for the leſs real, but more deſtructive honour, of being the terror of Europe.

The nobility of France, though always fond of following blindly the example of their kings, did not diſcover the ſame taſte for letters as Francis I.

Little removed from thoſe times when the heroes, who knew not how to read, could gain battles, and ſubdue provinces, they were conſcious of no glory but that of arms; and here we find one of thoſe circumſtances in our hiſtory, in which pride and prejudice prevailed over the deſire of paying court to the monarch. The natural diſpoſition of the courtiers to ignorance, found more indulgence under the kings who ſucceeded him, who were rather to be called protectors of letters, than zealous friends; I except neither

neither Charles IX. the author of ſome verſes, which, perhaps, would never have been mentioned if they had not been wrote by a ſovereign, nor even Henry IV. who, as ſome ſay, gave ſufficient encouragement to learned men, but who treated all his ſubjects nearly as well; becauſe, having conquered his kingdom, he had the affections of his people to engage, and any marks of diſtinction ſhewn to a ſmall number of particular men, might have tended to alienate the minds of the multitude.

However, on the one hand, as the power of the king increaſed, on the other, the ſhoot of knowledge, which bloomed under Francis I. became fruitful in the centre of the nation, without ſpreading itſelf much towards the extremities; or, in other words, it flouriſhed not among the poor, whoſe ſubſiſtence confined them to hard labour, nor among the rich, who ſpent their lives in idleneſs and intrigues. At laſt Lewis XIV. appeared, and the reſpect he ſhewed to men of letters ſoon gave the tone to a nation long accuſtomed to receive it from its lords. Ignorance ceaſed to be the dear privilege of the nobility; knowledge and genius, having recovered their reputation, ſurpaſſed thoſe bounds which unadviſed vanity ſeemed to have preſcribed. Philoſophy, animated by the eſteem of the monarch, by ſlow ſteps roſe out of the dungeon to which imbecility and ſuperſtition had confined it. Prejudice gradually retreated, without noiſe or violence, becauſe it is the nature of philoſophy to force no barriers, but to wait till they fall down before it, and to turn aſide when they will not.

Even

Even ſciences ſhe did not give birth to, and geniuſes, leaſt qualified for her ſervice, were not left deſtitute of encouragement.

The diffuſion of a philoſophical ſpirit through all books, and all ranks, forms that period of time when a people may be ſaid to be moſt enlightened. It is then that the body of the nation begins to have wiſdom; or, which is nearly the ſame, begins to perceive how much it is defective, after the labour of two centuries to procure it. It is then that the great begin to be ſolicitous, not only about the works, but the perſons, of moderate, as well as diſtinguiſhed reputation; they are eager, from vanity at leaſt, to reward abilities with marks of eſteem, often more intereſted than ſincere. Snatched from their ſolitude, learned men ſee themſelves tranſlated to a new vortex, where they have frequent occaſions of obſerving how injudiciouſly they are placed. This experiment I have tried, and it may be uſeful when we do not try it too long: the reflections which it ſuggeſted to me ſhall be the ſubject of this eſſay. As mankind in the ſame circumſtances, and with ſimilar intereſt, ſee nearly the ſame things, I doubt not but other learned men have made the ſame obſervations before me; ſo much the worſe for thoſe to whom they are new. However, the greateſt number muſt be ſtrangers to ſome or other of them, becauſe they were made in a country where I was only a paſſenger; and we cannot ſpeak with freedom of the nations we have viſited, till our return. I wiſh my reflections may be of ſome advantage to thoſe who ſhall follow me in

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the ſame courſe; but if I cannot propoſe to myſelf ſo reaſonable a deſign, I will imitate thoſe travellers who, though too well ſatisfied to have any deſire of recommencing their adventure, cannot help entertaining others with an account of them.

It is not ſurpriſing that the company of the great ſhould have ſome attractions for learned men. The real or apparent advantages to be drawn from ſuch a connection, eaſily preſent themſelves: the inconveniences are only known by experience. Such is the misfortune of ſelf-love, that, though it receives the deepeſt wounds from that which did not ſeem able to affect it, though it is very often more eaſily deceived than ſatisfied, it lays itſelf open to the advances of every-thing that may flatter, and never ſuſpects that which may do it an injury.

The firſt advantage which men of letters find in the world is, that they are more celebrated at leaſt, if not more known, and appear before a tribunal different from that of their rivals. To unfold, and, at the ſame time, to eſtimate this advantage, it is neceſſary to riſe higher, and to examine upon what principles, and in what manner, we endeavour to arrive at that glory which is founded on great talents.

The more genius a man has, the more diſcontented he is with it: I appeal to perſons of wit of all ages and nations. It is true, the examination they make of themſelves is in ſecret: the pleadings and ſentence of this proceſs are both carried on in the privy-chamber, if I may uſe ſuch an expreſſion, and they would be ſorry if the determination was confirmed by the

the world. On the contrary, the eſteem of others is a ſubſtitute to the unfavourable opinion we entertain of ourſelves; it is the ſtaff upon which ſelf-love ſupports itſelf. There are but two kinds of men who are perfectly ſatisfied in their judgments of themſelves, a perfect genius, which never exiſted, and a perfect fool, which is common enough; the inability of the laſt to underſtand his own ignorance, ſupplies that which he does not know; from hence it happens, that, in the diſtribution of happineſs, fools are far from having the worſt ſhare.

I doubt not but men of letters, who have taken the pains to look into themſelves, and to think like philoſophers, will readily admit the truth of what I advance. The merit of mens writings is like that of their hearts, none can pronounce upon it ſo well as themſelves, becauſe none can have ſo near a point of view, nor ſo long an acquaintance. It is in conſequence of this, that the more the excellence of a work conſiſts in ſomething intrinſic and independent of opinion, the leſs ſolicitous we are of the approbation of others: from whence it comes, that the ſatisfaction ariſing from the ſtudy of geometry is ſo pure and complete, the progreſs we make in that ſcience, and the degree of excellence to which we attain, may be meaſured, I might ſay, with the ſame accuracy as the objects to which it relates.

We have no occaſion to recur to the eſtimate of others, except in thoſe caſes where there is no eſtabliſhed ſtandard, and there we hope they will be favourable to us. Now, in ſubjects of taſte and the

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belles lettres, it consists in a certain kind of value, which is always arbitrary in part, if not wholly so, at least as far as negligence, passion, or caprice, interfere in raising or depressing it. This makes it evident to me, that, if mankind were to live separate, and to employ themselves in the pursuit of such objects as their preservation dictated, they would prefer the study of the useful, to the entertaining sciences. We devote our thoughts to the latter for the advantage of others, to the former for our own. A poet in a desart island would, in my opinion, be a very idle character in comparison of a geometrician. It is natural to conclude, from these reflections, that the desire of reputation, though natural to mankind, is sufficient to mortify them, when philosophically considered. But, without examining so severe a consequence, let us go a little farther, and pursue all the frauds, or, as Montaigne says, all the lures of self-love.

Though it is jealous of the power of deceiving others, it must not deceive them too grosly; for they may soon be convinced of their mistake, and avenge themselves by a contempt as unjust as their esteem. Besides, should the illusion of others continue, the more gross it is, the more is the flattery of self-love diminished; the pleasure we find in imposing upon others, is constituted, in part, of the satisfaction that is felt in seeing ourselves better judges than they of our own qualifications and abilities; but, to make this satisfaction as pure and perfect as possible, it is of importance to have our cause before disinterested

arbiters, who shall have no motives, from rivalship or passion, to depress us; so well skilled, as not to be suspected of pronouncing without examination; and so superficial, as to give us no reason to dread the severity of their judgment.

This, if I am not mistaken, is the reason why the generality of learned men seek after the esteem and protection of the great.

It is taken for granted their education has given them some judgment, at least we find this prejudice generally established, and, as vanity finds an advantage here, it avails itself of it: for philosophers themselves never fail to foment prejudices which may benefit, with the same ardour that they attack those which may hurt them.

They are principally solicitous to retain in their cause those among the great who, without devoting themselves to the profession of letters, cultivate them in a certain degree, but are not indebted to them either for their fortune or distinction; having nothing to fear from the acuteness of their penetration, they find in them precisely that share of understanding which does not alarm the jealousy of their self-love. Nevertheless, as this sort of half connoisseurs is rare among the great, he does not confine himself to aim only at the esteem of the most celebrated, but persuades himself to press into his service the whole body, because he hopes that, his admirers being the greatest number, their approbation will draw a multitude of followers after them. The suffrages of this troop of subalterns would be a little flattering, if

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they ſtood alone, but, when adorned by a leading vote, they not only increaſe their number, but acquire a kind of additional value. Self-love, inſatiable in its appetite for glory, ſeeks to eſpouſe to its intereſt thoſe among the great who have moſt of theſe echoes at their command; a leſs delicate vanity is content with ranking one or two great names in the number of its patrons.

Such is the real or pretended utility which men of letters think they draw to their reputation from a commerce with the great; I mean by this word all thoſe who, either from their anceſtors or themſelves, have attained a conſiderable diſtinction in ſociety: for in a ſtate ſo monarchical as ours, where there is, properly ſpeaking, but one lord, the power of the prince blends the ſtate happily together. Opulence, the proof of independence and credit, readily joins itſelf by its own authority to high birth; and I do not know but it would be wrong to prevent it. The inferior ſtates, who are poſſeſſed of neither of them, endeavour to place themſelves in the ſame line, with a view, undoubtedly, of leſſening the number of that claſs of men who are above them, and to bring the different conditions of life to that equality which is ſo natural, and to which they are always tending, without being conſcious of it.

I will now, with permiſſion, cooly eſtimate, without caprice or flattery, theſe Diſpenſers of renown, and the right which they uſurp, or are entitled to, of delivering their oracles.

It is but juſt, however, for me previouſly to declare, that it is not my intention here to eſtabliſh any principles or facts, which are abſolutely univerſal; ſome exceptions there are, I acknowledge it with pleaſure: birth and fortune neither exclude talents, nor beſtow them.

Firſt of all, I ſhall not be timorous in branding with the name of prejudice the common opinion, which ſuppoſes the Great to have a better education than others; and conſequently, (if equal in other reſpects) to be more intelligent judges. The education they receive being wholly confined to external accompliſhments, may qualify them to impoſe on the people, but not to judge of men. What a ſatire upon our manners is Philip's letter to Ariſtotle on the birth-day of Alexander*! What would Socrates have ſaid of the public education we give to our young nobility, of the puerilities which we encourage in them, as if there

* "The gods (were the words of Philip to the fineſt genius of "that age) have given me a ſon; but I thank them not ſo much "for giving me one, as for giving him in the time of Ariſtotle." This letter, which equally redounds to the honour of the prince and of the philoſopher, ought to immortalize Philip in the eſteem of wiſe men, more than thoſe dangerous abilities with which he forged the chains of Greece. Such letters to philoſophers have been now a long time obſolete: I don't mean only from princes, but from perſons who have no hope of becoming ſuch. But now I ſpeak of the Great only by the bye, and becauſe it has a neceſſary relation to my ſubject. What a world of matter would ſo important a point ſuggeſt!

was

was nothing better to be taught them? Senſible of the ſituation of youthful minds, who are moſt ſuſceptible of the impreſſions of goodneſs, grandeur, and truth, he had but too frequent occaſion to inculcate upon their maſters, the maxims which are ſo applicable to our preſent manners, that "youth could "not be too much reſpected."

But how aſtoniſhed would he have been to ſee perſons living in the midſt of a religion ſo meek and lowly as ours, and ſo well calculated to humble the mind of man, continually affecting to remind the noble pupils of the glory of their name and birth, and for want of more real and honourable motives, having recourſe to ſuch as theſe; inſtead of repeating to them, as they always ſhould, that all mankind are their equals by the intention of nature; that on account of talents, many are their ſuperiors; and that a great name, to him who knows how to think, is of as great weight and value as the moſt pompous equipage!

I doubt not but this cenſure of the public education of the Great, which is unfortunately too juſt, will be oppoſed by thoſe encomiums which celebrated perſons have given them. I anſwer, that they only ſpeak of what it ought to be, or, if what they ſaid of it might be true in their days, it is palpably different now. I dare ſay to theſe ſeges, "Come and ſee." I am as little ſolicitous about another objection, from there having been a few happy geniuſes, whoſe ſingular talents have not been ſtifled by a bad education. It would be equally as pleaſant to pretend there is no difficulty

in poliſhing the Muſcovites, becauſe the Czar was born among them.

It is with this rich fund of ideas and capacity, that ſo many of the Great judge and condemn what they ought to revere. They have not even the ſorry ſatisfaction of knowing where they are unjuſt. Having neither received from others, nor acquired of themſelves, the principles of criticiſing upon any thing, is it aſtoniſhing, that they ſhould be ignorant of any difference either in writings or in men? The writer, who viſits and flatters them moſt, however little in himſelf, is to them the firſt of his order; as the courtier is moſt in the graces of the miniſter who ſolicits with moſt aſſiduity. This man of letters is their oracle, and their council, and they are the echo of his ridiculous deciſions.

This affords us a proſpect, not leſs agreeable than philoſophical, to ſee how widely they vary in their judgments: the current ſentiments, which their flatterers take care to dictate to them, are their own again, becauſe they have none but from them. The laſt work of a famous man, who has not had the good fortune to pleaſe them, is always the worſt of his productions: and they never begin to do him juſtice, till ſome new performance of his offers new food to their ſatire; they then declare 'that his former piece diſcovered ſome 'ingenuity; but what can be expected from a genius 'quite exhauſted?'

The moſt effectual method of making theſe Ariſtarchuſes more circumſpect, would be to prevail upon them

them to give their opinion under their own hand. At the end of a very few years, when the fury of cabal and the ſpirit of party yield to the deciſion of the wiſe, theſe unrelenting, but ignorant, judges would be found either contradicting themſelves or the public: for notwithſtanding all the injuries charged ſo often upon the public, and ſometimes ſo deſervedly, it generally determines with judgment and equity. It is true, the public which judges, that is to ſay, which thinks, is not conſtituted of thoſe who pronounce, nor of all who read. Its decrees are not tumultuous; ſometimes it gives a ſecond examination, where prejudice and paſſion ſeemed to think they had decided the cauſe; and its oracles committed to the truſt of a ſmall number of celebrated men, at leaſt teach the multitude the opinions they are to form.

Beſides, it is among men of letters, and among them only, that they muſt expect to meet with themſelves, that is, with perſons of the ſame art, (whatever it be) capable of eſtimating the true beauties of a work, and the degrees of difficulty that have been ſurmounted in executing it. If the Great have any right to be eſteemed ſound judges, it is only ſo far as they are, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, men of letters themſelves. A mere admirer of an art ſeldom reaſons with ſo much judgment, I will not ſay as an accompliſhed artiſt, but as an indifferent one. It is in vain to imagine, that a talent ſo eaſy and common as that of compoſing bad works, (which may be dignified by the honourable appellation of works of The Society) gives a title to the requiſite qualities of a judge.

It requires an exertion of all the powers we poſſeſs, to obtain a juſt knowledge of the ſecrets of an art; it is no leſs than a gift flowing fromthe generous profuſion of nature. Now, to diſplay all the efforts in our power, we muſt not confine our views in writing to the little circle of friends or complaiſant flatterers; we muſt addreſs our performances to the world, or at leaſt finiſh them with the ſame pains, as if they were to make their appearance in it.

Woe be to the author, whoſe work ſeeks only the paſſport of his own times, or obtains no more than the ſanction of five or ſix votes, already engaged by a previous peruſal! I appeal to thoſe abortive productions, which their illuſtrious authors condemn ſo juſtly to perpetual obſcurity, and which thoſe who are privy to them, muſt one day as extravagantly deſpiſe, as they before applauded them. I appeal to the genuine ſentiments of the public, when by ſome misfortune or ſome ill addreſs of vanity, theſe performances venture to make their public appearance. Perhaps ſome may ſay, "What, will you bring a man of letters to be "judged by his rivals? what indulgence has he to "hope for from the emulation of a competitor, at leaſt "when he has not been able to ſettle his own judgment "concerning himſelf?" To anſwer this objection, I muſt remark, that among men of letters, who purſue the ſame path, as there are different talents, ſo there are different claſſes. Theſe claſſes are ſufficiently marked of themſelves; and men of letters, by a kind of tacit convention, form this diſtinction without intending it.

Each

Each perſon, indeed, I muſt confeſs, endeavours to advance himſelf to a claſs more elevated than he is qualified to fill; but there is no reaſon to fear, leſt the ſeveral ranks ſhould be overturned by theſe pretenſions; for vanity can never be deluded beyond a certain degree: the ſole effect of this is, to reduce the number of the claſſes, for they can never be confounded all together: beſides, he who ſhould aſpire to univerſal and perpetual monarchy, even though he ſhould be worthy of it, would run a great riſque of finding many malecontents; that anarchy which deſtroys political ſtates, gives ſtrength and ſubſiſtence to the literary republic. It is with ſome difficulty that any magiſtrates are endured; but kings are utterly unſupportable.

The different claſſes being thus conſtituted, and each having nothing to diſtinguiſh it from its neighbours, if we are not equitably tried in our own claſs, we may may obtain juſtice at leaſt in the inferior or ſuperior ones. If we were to conſult theſe different claſſes ſeparately, there would reſult from the combination of their ſuffrages, a deciſion on which we may ſafely rely, when we are not qualified to paſs judgment on ourſelves. Thus the ſentiment of common ſoldiers and ſubalterns, is a far more equitable teſt of the abilities of a general, than that of prejudiced rivals, or corrupted flatterers. It is the ſame in the courſe of literature; the determination of connoiſſeurs produces ſometimes a ſlow effect, becauſe it finds itſelf frequently encountered by a great number of unjuſt and clamorous deciſions. It is as true with reſpect to taſte and

genius as philoſophy; nothing is more rarely poſſeſſed, more impracticable to acquire, nor more commonly pretended to. Hence ſo many reputations uſurped, for a time at leaſt, which while they call forth moderate talents, only diſcourage great ones, and humble them by letting them ſee through what hands fame is diſtributed. Hence that mob of petty ſocieties and tribunals, where great geniuſes are mangled to pieces by perſons not worthy to read them.

If perſons of diſtinguiſhed talents did but poſſeſs a little more practical philoſophy than they do, it would be an entertainment to them to ſee the quarrels of theſe little ſocieties we are ſpeaking of, and the contempt they affect for one another, or rather the ſtrict juſtice with which they treat each other's merit; the high and deciſive air with which they ſpurn the ſentence of their rival, to make it ridiculous; and, in ſhort, the neologiſm they have introduced into our language, from which better writers are ſcarce able to ſecure themſelves.

A proſpect like this, viewed with the eyes of calm reaſon, is more than ſufficient to conſole true philoſophy under the loſs of a multitude of frivolous voices. Like a powerful ſovereign, rendered by his ſuperior forces inacceſſible to every attack, he may look down and ſee at a diſtance barbarous corſairs mangling one another, after attempting, in vain, to injure the frontiers of his dominions; but philoſophers, or rather thoſe who profeſs themſelves ſuch, like ſovereign princes, cannot diſſemble the leaſt inſult; and the

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desire of returning vengeance often proves more hurtful to them than the insults themselves.

We are little acquainted with the nature of envy, if we think we can silence it, by appearing too sensible of it: this is only giving it that consequence which it desires. Posterity had been ignorant of the very names of Bœvius and Mævius, if Virgil had not been so weak as to mention them in his verses.

Men of letters, of a certain rank, degrade themselves by answering satire; and they are blamed for it by the public, which sometimes takes a malignant pleasure in the shafts that are thrown against them. A man, whose talents and genius give him the conscioufness of deserving reputation, may let the public voice alone. He need not trouble himself with dictating what it shall determine; but wait, if I may say so, for future fame to come and take his orders. He will soon put to silence every inferior voice, as the force of the fundamental sound in a concord destroys every dissonance which tends to alter the harmony.

But the man of letters is so little of a philosopher, as to be chagrined because justice is not done him; and so imprudent as to suffer his resentments to be blazed abroad. Then envy redoubles her attacks, and even ridicules him for not enjoying the reputation of his own excellent works. In short, we must act in fame as cautiously as in sickness; impatience is fatal in either of them. How many men are there distinguished for their rare endowments, to whom we may apply the rebuke formerly made to a Carthaginian general, "The gods do not give all talents to one:

" you have that of obtaining a victory, but not that " of using one."

Renown is a kind of game of commerce, where chance sometimes gets a fortune; but where merit acquires, in general, more certain gains; provided, that while it uses the tricks of gamesters, it does not expose itself to be betrayed by them. But it is too frequently considered as a mere lottery, where persons imagine they make their fortune by inventing false tickets.

When I consider the empire of letters, I think I see a spacious place, crouded with a multitude of empirics mounted upon stages, calling to passengers, and deceiving the people; who begin with laughing at them, and end with being their dupes. It is by these means so many writers gain a kind of name in the world. Would you be applauded for a wit? tell the public aloud that you are one. You will be ridiculed by a great number: you will impose, however, upon some fools, who will gather round you. The mob will thicken more and more; and those who would not hearken to you at first, shall either fall in with the opinion of the multitude at last, or be forced to hold their tongues.

Thus the reputation of some literati, when compared with their works and their persons, is a very extraordinary phænomenon, which cannot be accounted for; but which must be admitted, out of respect to what is called the public. We must recollect on this occasion, the story of the naturalist, who upon attempting to explain why caverns are warmer in summer than winter,

winter, ſaid, Perhaps it was owing to one cauſe; and perhaps to another; and perhaps it was not true.

I ſhall not declaim before learned men on the common-place topics of contempt of glory, ſo often recommended, and with ſuch little ſincerity, by philoſophers. I will not ſeek to degrade motives, which without having, if you will, any real foundation, are the ſprings of every thing great, uſeful, and agreeable among mankind. The eſteem of our cotemporaries and fellow-countrymen is a felicity by common agreement; and ſo univerſally is it acknowledged for ſuch, that it would be ſenſeleſs, uſeleſs, and dangerous to undeceive the world in this point. But as public eſteem is the object which calls forth great performances, it is by great performances alone that we muſt ſeek to obtain it, or at leaſt to deſerve it; and not to uſurp it by idle and deſpicable machinations.

Write as if you was in love with glory: act as if you was indifferent to it.

Theſe conſiderations chiefly belong to thoſe, whom we call wits; and whoſe works being intended to be read, meet with the worſt judges. They are leſs neceſſary to thoſe who are engaged in the demonſtrative ſciences, where merit does not ſtand ſo much in need of the eſtimation of others to determine it. But it would tempt one to be of a different opinion, to ſee the artifice they have recourſe to, to obtain ſuffrages, that are more pompous than honourable; and the envenomed hatred they carry about them, which they have not the prudence to conceal; yet theſe men have

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the modesty to call themselves philosophers; as if philosophy, before it pretended to regulate the system of the world, should not teach us to begin with ourselves, and to set a proper value upon every object. We place the hatred of poets next to that of women: I don't know but it would be right to rank that of these men betwixt them both, or at their head. A severe epigram exhausts all the vengeance of a poet. The rage of a philosopher is more constant and inflexible, though it has no more for its object, perhaps, than to stand in the list of the partizans of a woman, who takes herself for a great personage, only because she has overcome the fatigue of reading philosophical books, without understanding them.

I am far from imagining this a just portrait of all those who run the noble career of science; neither am I willing to make any particular application: this would be disfiguring, and spoiling by satire, an essay which I would have solely dedicated to truth. General paintings are only permitted by philosophy and humanity. It is true, if we seldom apply them, they will be little serviceable; but portraits of a peculiar kind, and striking likeness, are still less.

To avoid the like reproach, let us draw a veil over the intercourses of the learned. When I speak of the learned, I don't mean by that term those who may be called persons of erudition; they are a nation little known, and not very numerous or commercial, and quite innocent of this charge. Most of them belonged to the sixteenth century, and had the good fortune to be strangers to ours. Happy would it be, if our philosophers

loſophers and geometricians lived together like them; their labour profited the world, without making ſo much clamour; and in this reſpect they were better.

A ſtranger wrote a book with this title, "Of the "quackery of the learned:" this title promiſed much. If unfortunately the book did not prove a good one, it was not becauſe the author wanted memoirs, but becauſe the memoirs wanted an author. However, if he had travelled in France, he had deprived his book of an excellent chapter.

To examine things without prejudice, why do we prefer to a man of erudition whom we neglect, a philoſopher and geometrician whom we underſtand leſs, and who contributes, ſeemingly, nothing to our amuſement? Opinion and eſtabliſhed cuſtom have certainly a great ſhare in ſo arbitrary a preference. What has brought into faſhion geometricians ſo much of late? It uſed to be regarded as an inconteſtable thing, that a geometrician, being tranſported out of his own ſphere, could not poſſibly have common ſenſe. It was eaſy, indeed, to rectify this miſtake by reading Deſcartes, Hobbes, Paſcal, and many others: but that was too much trouble. To how many perſons have theſe great men never yet exiſted! In England they were contented in having the greateſt genius of his age; in France they would not have been ſatisfied if he had not been an agreeable man. In fine, a geometrician, of the firſt reputation, ſnatched from us by Pruſſia, is found to poſſeſs, in an uncommon degree, all that engaging ſprightlineſs which we ſo much admire, and which he adorned by more ſubſtantial qualities, that ſprightlineſs

lineſs which geometry is no more likely do deſtroy where it is, than the belles lettres are to give where it is not. All at once our eyes are open to behold as it were a new and extraordinary phænomenon. We are aſtoniſhed to find that a geometrician is not a kind of ſavage. Immediately, as we keep no medium in our judgment, a geometrician is a ſight indiſcriminately ſought after. 'Tis true, this madneſs does not laſt long; not becauſe it is found to be a madneſs, but becauſe no madneſs is of long continuance in our nation. It ſtill ſubſiſts, though in an inferior degree. But if I was one of theſe geometricians, I ſhould not be much elated with the reception they meet with. The elogium beſtowed on them are only relative to the unfavourable idea formerly conceived of them. He is a great geometrician, they ſay, and an agreeable man too; encomiums ſufficiently mortifying in their principle, and ſimilar to thoſe we give noblemen. Should the laſt happen to reaſon tolerably well on a work of ſcience or belles lettres, we extol their ſagacity to the ſkies; as if a man of quality was forced, by his rank, to be leſs inſtructed than others in the ſubject on which he ſpeaks. In a word, in France we treat geometricians and the nobility as we do Turkiſh and Perſian ambaſſadors. We are ſurpriſed to find good ſenſe, in the moſt ordinary degree, in a perſon who is neither a Frenchman nor a Chriſtian; and, conſequently, we catch at every trivial and fooliſh thing that drops from their lips, as ſo many apophthegms. In truth, were we to trace the motives of thoſe elogiums, which ſome perſons are ſo prodigal of, we ſhould find enough to

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conſole us under their ſatire, and, perhaps, even their contempt.

I cannot quit this ſubject without making ſome reflections on that paſſion we affect for ſtrangers. What I am going to ſay will be the leſs a digreſſion, ſince ſtrangers, being ſo well received every where now-a-days, and eſpecially when they are rich and of great name, they conſtitute a particular party in the world; which deſerves obſervation, as they are courted by men of letters for the ſake of their beloved reputation.

When we attentively conſider the ſtrangers tranſplanted amongſt us, whom we reproach by the elogiums we are ſo profuſe of, we rarely diſcover any other motive for them than a ridiculous prejudice in our own favour, joined to an ambition of humbling our fellow-countrymen.

I ſhould be ſorry if the Engliſh, whom we affect to praiſe in preference to others, ſhould be dupes to theſe motives. I may be accuſed, perhaps, of revealing a ſecret of ſtate; but I believe I am going to commit no great crime. However it happens, I confeſs, that with all the eſteem I have for their perſons, I have ſtill more for their nation: and I am as little curious to ſee an Engliſhman at Paris, as I ſhould be to ſee a Frenchman at London. Such a lord arrived here, with a very great reputation, who appears in converſation to be no more than a common perſon. He may be a great ſtateſman, and know how to treat the moſt important ſubjects in the ſenate, in his own language, and yet ſtammer in a ſtrange tongue, among

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a people whose customs, interests, ridiculousness and littleness he is utterly unacquainted with.

It is to men of letters, we must ackowledge, that the English nation is indebted for the prodigious good fortune it has met with among us. Inferior to the French in matters of taste and agreeableness, but superior in merit, at least in the number of excellent philosophers she has produced, she has gradually communicated, in the works of her writers, that precious liberty of thinking, which reason knows how to improve, which men of wit abuse, and which fools murmur at.

So many French pens have celebrated England, that their elogiums seemed to have calmed the national hatred, at least on our part: for it must be agreed, that in this point we have the advantage of them a little; and they do not exactly return the praises we give them. Is not this reserve (by the way) an acknowledgment of our superiority? at least, the honour they do us to come and see our taste, our air, and even our prejudice, is a kind of tacit and involuntary elogium, which the French vanity can accomodate itself to better than any other. It seems that we have actually made an exchange with England: instructed and enlightened by them, we seem to carry away, at least to dispute with them, the glory of the mathematical sciences; and they, on the other hand, are about deriving from our conversation and books, that taste, and agreeableness, and method, which is wanting in their productions. Let us take care that she does not soon surpass her masters.

Our

Our literati, who have contributed so much to the progress of the madness of Anglicism, have very good reasons for protecting and countenancing their own conduct. They flatter themselves, that the respect they express for strangers will be paid them back again at the same price; that they will celebrate their admirers upon their return to their own country, and acquaint France, in their writings, what treasures she possesses, sometimes incognito, and without ostentation. This is, doubtless, taking a long rout to fame; but the longest way in this case is the least troublesome, and if reputation does but come at last, they will submit to wait for it with patience.

Sometimes a man of letters makes himself a stranger to his own country, and removes three hundred leagues from envy, after having strove against it in vain; but he forgets that distance, which disarms the shafts of satire, likewise chills the ardor of friendship more than of hatred; and that with respect to the connections, which were formed with persons at a great distance, they are often broke when they are present. Thus all the advantage he reaps from this step is, cooling the zeal of the friends he has in the place to which he retires, and going to seek for new enemies. He flatters himself, that strangers are a kind of living POSTERITY, whose testimony will triumph over compatriots that are either blind or insincere. He is not aware, that the more he is attached to strangers, the less they deserve the name of POSTERITY, to constitute which the distance of leagues is much less necessary than the distance of years; in proportion as they become

come in a certain degree his fellow countrymen, they adopt his paſſions, becauſe they have the ſame intereſts; the greateſt ſuperiority cannot intirely ſtifle the voice of envy, and he muſt wait till it is no more, to receive the recompence of that real POSTERITY, before which jealouſy is eclipſed, and all little objects vaniſh away. The only motive which can juſtify a man of letters in renouncing his country, is the cry of ſuperſtition raiſed againſt his works, and the perſecutions, ſometimes ſecret, ſometimes public, which ſhe kindles againſt him. However indebted he may be to his fellow countrymen for the uſe of his talents, he is more to himſelf for his own happineſs; and he may then adopt the words of Milo; "If I "can no longer enjoy the bleſſings of my native "country, at leaſt I will avoid the evils it may in"flict upon me, and I will go and ſeek my repoſe "in a ſtate that is juſt and free." Thus the Ariſtotles, the Deſcarteſes, and ſuch like, conducted themſelves.

To finiſh theſe reflections, I could wiſh ſome ingenious author would give us a philoſophical deſcription of the temple of literary fame; till a more able architect riſes up, I will preſent my reader with the idea I have formed of it.

We are conducted to this temple through an immenſe foreſt, by a kind of labyrinth, planted with little piercing thorns, and ſo narrow, that two travellers cannot walk abreaſt without throwing one another down. In the middle of the foreſt, and in front of the temple, there is one ſingle, grand avenue,

infeſted

infeſted with free-booters, and not many others, except it be a few either ſo courageous as to reſiſt them, or ſo complaiſant as to pay them reſpect on the road.

Fame, a ſpectre compoſed of lips and ears, without eyes, having a falſe ballance in one hand, and a diſcordant trumpet in the other, admits a party of travellers into the temple in the utmoſt confuſion; then all ſtates are confounded, while the reſt of the candidates, eager to enter, but repulſed by fortune or juſtice, make the environs of the temple reſound with their ſatires againſt thoſe who are within. The ſanctuary is peopled only with thoſe dead, who were denied entrance in their lives, or of thoſe living, who were almoſt always chaſed away till their death. A few good books are found in the ſanctuary intire, and a few detached of a ſtill greater number; but on the outſide of the temple may be read the ſimple titles of an infinite number of others affixed to all the columns of the portico, and preſented by the hawkers to reward all paſſengers, juſt like the bills of mountebanks and empirics at the doors of our public places, which we receive without ever reading them.

Thus I have, in my opinion, ſtated thoſe principles which will enable us to eſtimate that reputation, which men of letters think they derive from the ſociety of the Great. There is, beſides this, another advantage which they expect to find in this commerce, and that is what they call IMPORTANCE, and which we muſt not confound with reputation; the laſt is principally the reward of talents or ingenuity; the firſt is connected with rank, place, riches,

or,

or, in general, with the need we ſtand in of thoſe on whom they are beſtowed. Abſence, or diſtance of time and place, far from enfeebling reputation, become uſeful to it; the other, on the contrary, being wholly external, ſeems inſeparable from the preſent.

Let us endeavour to ſee this in a philoſophical point of view. All men (whatever weakneſs or flattery may pretend) by the law of nature, are equal: The principle of this equality is found in the mutual occaſion we have of each other, and the neceſſity of living together in ſociety; but this natural equality is in ſome meaſure deſtroyed by an inequality of convention, which, by making a diſtinction of ranks, has preſcribed to each a certain order of external duties; external duties I ſay, for the internal and real ones are perfectly equal to all, though of a different kind: To mention the higheſt ſtate; the ſovereign himſelf owes juſtice to the meaneſt of his ſubjects, as rigorouſly as they owe obedience to him.

The grand diſtinctions among mankind are owing to theſe four things; abilities, wit, birth and fortune. Let none wonder that I begin with abilities; in effect, it is in theſe that the true difference of mankind conſiſts. Yet it muſt be allowed, if the queſtion of ſuperiority is to be decided by that which contributes moſt to happineſs, by that which renders us moſt independent of each other, and others moſt dependent upon us, by that which brings us the moſt apparent friends, and the feweſt declared enemies; then fortune undoubtedly ought to have the

firſt

first place. Notwithstanding this, why happens it that talents obtain the preference in the public esteem? It is because they have the valuable advantage of being a certain resource which cannot be taken away, and which even misfortunes serve but to render more quick and sure; it is because a nation is principally indebted to abilities for the esteem of strangers, and the benefits it is capable of drawing from a crowd of neighbours, whether equitable or jealous, which surround it.

But if, in the order of public estimation, abilities go before birth and fortune; in return, they are behind both of them at a very great distance in the order of external importance. This practice, altogether inconstant, and perhaps unjust as it is, must be founded, however, on some reasons; for it is impossible that all men, without some motives, plausible ones at least, should admit a prejudice burthensome to the greatest number.

I apprehend this to be the principle of it:

Mankind not finding it in their power to be equal, it is necessary that the difference betwixt them should be settled and peaceful, that it should be built on those advantages which can neither be disputed nor denied; now this is what is found in birth and fortune. To ascertain the difference betwixt any two persons, nothing more is required, than to be able to determine the value of titles, and their contract, and this is easier done than by putting talents in their place. The disparity betwixt them in this respect will not be so unanimously acknowledged, especially by

by interested parties. It is convenient then that birth and fortune should be the principal mark of the inequality among men, for the same reason that every-thing is decided in company by a plurality of voices, though the determination of the greatest number is not always the best.

Thus the reason is evident why importance and reputation cannot possibly be the same. A man of letters, full of probity and wisdom, is incomparably more excellent than an incapable minister, or a peer in disgrace; nevertheless, let them be in the same place, and all the attention will be paid to rank, and the man of letters may say, like Philopœmen, "I pay a tax for my bad * look." In vain will you object to me the honour given to Corneille, that he had a place allotted to him in the theatre, and that all the company saluted him when he made his appearance. I answer, either that the fact is exaggerated, or that they had a mind to shew a mark of distinction to that great man in particular, which the nation had decreed him in public.

* The story to which this alludes is this: Philopœmen had a mean aspect, and took no pains to adorn his person. Once he sent word to a friend in Megara, that he would sup with him; but going earlier than he was expected, and before his friend was ready to receive him, he was employed by some of the servants in cleaving wood; and being surprised by his host, and asked, how he could be employed in so dishonourable an employment? he chearfully replied, I am now suffering for my bad looks and appearance.

It

It is so true, that importance is annexed to state rather than abilities, that of two men of letters he who is the weakest, but the most wealthy, is generally caressed with the most civility. If ingenious men are offended with this distinction, they have nobody to complain of but themselves: Let them cease to lavish their homage upon a set of men, who think they honour them by taking notice of them, and who seem to shew, by the ostentation of their politeness, that it is an act of benevolence rather than justice: Let them cease to court the company of the great, reminded by the secret and visible disgusts they meet with. Let them no longer be ignorant of those advantages, which superiority of genius gives them over other men. In short, let them not prostrate themselves before the knees of those who ought to be at their feet. A man of merit ought, on this occasion, to act the part of Achilles at the court of Scyros, happy when he could find an Ulysses capable of being brought over to his side. But where are the Ulysseses?

Men of letters, who pay their court to the great, form different classes. Some are their slaves, without being sensible of it, and consequently without remedy; others are filled with indignation at a disagreeable personage when he is forced upon them, yet do not fail to support themselves constantly under it, by the advantage they flatter themselves with deriving from it to their fortune. It is pardoning them to pity them: They might easily be convinced by their own experience, that this method of arriving

at a fortune is very tedious, and by no means certain, and that a great many complaiſances and baſeneſſes are neceſſary to accompliſh this moſt deſpicable ſervice. A third claſs, not ſo numerous, includes thoſe, who, having formed in the morning the moſt ſerious projects of continuing free, begin the evening with being ſlaves, and who, at all times, bold and timid, noble and intereſted, ſeem to reject with one hand, what they are ſtretching out the other to lay hold of.

The little conſiſtence between their ſentiments and conduct makes them reſemble certain amphibious animals, whoſe nature is not determined, though their exiſtence is out of all doubt. In this laſt claſs, in my apprehenſion the moſt criminal, we may rank thoſe, who, after having paid incenſe to the great in public, pull them in pieces among particulars, and make a great parade among their equals in philoſophy, which coſts them very little. This claſs is more extenſive than we are apt to imagine. They imitate thoſe ſects of antient philoſophers, who, after worſhipping publicly in the temple, ridicule Jupiter in private; with this difference, that the philoſophers of Greece and Rome were obliged to frequent the temple, but nothing obliges the others to offer worſhip to mens perſons.

I do not mean to fix the ſame reproach upon thoſe who live with the great, only to tell them the truth. This is, doubtleſs, the moſt honourable part we can act before men; but have they deſerved—that we ſhould run ſuch riſques?

Lucian,

Lucian, whom we may call the Grecian Swift, because, like him, he laughed at every-thing, even at thoſe things which did not deſerve it, has left us a very ſpirited diſſertation upon men of letters, who devote themſelves to the ſervice of the great. The tablet he has drawn might very juſtly be inſerted under the article of calumny*: "Figure to yourſelves, ſays "he, Fortune upon a lofty throne environed with "precipices, and round her an infinite number of "people eager to climb up to it, while they are "dazzled with her glory. Hope, richly adorned, "offers to be their guide, having at her ſide Deceit "and Slavery. Behind her Labour and Pain (and, I "would have added, the vexation of the ſons of "opulence and grandeur) torment the miſerable "wretches, and abandon them to old age and re-"pentance." I am ſorry that this ſame Lucian, after having ſaid, that ſlavery to the great deſtroys the very name of friendſhip, ſhould end by accepting a place in the ſervice of the emperor, and, what is worſe, by juſtifying himſelf in this reſpect ſo wretchedly, he is like an empiric violently ill of the tooth-ache, who ſells infallible medicines againſt it. Lucian began by being a philoſopher; the reputation of his works made him univerſally ſought after; this ſhould have ſerved to make his retreat the more inacceſſible, for philoſophy is like devotion, to make no longer progreſs, is to ſtop. He reſign'd himſelf to the careſſes which awaited him, became a man of

* The article Calumny in the Encyclopedia.

the world without perceiving it, and concluded with being a courtier.

The laſt part is the baſeſt that can be acted by a man of letters. In effect, what is a courtier? He is a man whom the misfortune of kings and people has placed betwixt the ſovereign and truth to conceal it from his eyes. The weak tyrant liſtens to and loves theſe vile and dangerous men: The able tyrant avails himſelf of them, and deſpiſes them. The king, who knows how to reign, baniſhes them from his preſence, and puniſhes them, and then truth regains her aſcendancy.

It has been ſaid, what a happineſs it would be for ſtates, if kings were philoſophers. It would be ſufficient if they were ſurrounded by wiſe men; but philoſophy ſhuns a court, and either would be a miſanthrope there, or very uneaſy, and therefore very improperly ſituated. Ariſtotle at laſt was diſcontented with Alexander; and Plato, at the court of Dionyſius, reproached himſelf for having endured, in his old age, the caprices of a young tyrant. In vain did another philoſopher, a flatterer of this Dionyſius, ſeek to excuſe his living at a court, by ſaying, that phyſicians ſhould always attend the diſeaſed. He might eaſily be anſwered, that when diſorders are incurable and contagious, to undertake their cure is expoſing ourſelves to the infection. If there muſt be philoſophers at court, it is for juſt ſuch a reaſon as there are profeſſors of Arabic in the republic of letters, who may teach a language which ſcarce anybody ſtudies, and which they themſelves are in danger

of

of forgetting, without recalling it by frequent exercise.

The wise man, in paying to birth and fortune those devotions which society has prescribed, is in some respects frugal of them; he confines them to externals, because a philosopher should know how to manage, and not to inflame, the prejudices of the nation: He should salute the idols of the people when he is obliged to it, but never seek them of his own accord. Does he find himself under that rare necessity of making his court, which he is sometimes compelled to from great and laudable motives? Protected by his talents and his virtue, he smiles, without anger or disdain, upon the man whom he is then obliged to address. The man of quality, whose ancestors are his only merit, is of no more consequence in the eye of reason, than an old man returned to infancy, who once performed great things; or rather he is a man to whom all others must use a certain language, because a certain personage of the same name, some years before, had either genius or power, or riches or fame, or perhaps only fortune and address.

The wise man does not forget, that if ingenuity must pay to titles external respect, that titles owe ingenuity other homage more real and valuable: But how many learned men split upon this rock in their connections with the great! If they are not permitted to use that familiarity, and that perfect equality, without which all the intercourses of society are insipid and spiritless, the distance is mortifying, because they have frequent occasions of feeling it; and

if they go into familiarity, it is the fable of the lion, with whom it is dangerous to play.

A man of letters, forced by ſingular circumſtances to ſpend his days near a miniſter of ſtate, ſaid one day, with much truth and delicacy, "he would be "familiar with me, but I puſh him from me with "reſpect."

Among the moſt affable and courteous perſons of diſtinction, there are few who, in company with men of letters, lay aſide their real or pretended grandeur ſo far as to forget it altogether. This is obſervable, particularly in thoſe converſations where we are not of their opinion. It ſeems, that in proportion as the man of genius eclipſes him, the man of quality ſhews himſelf, and appears to exact a deference which the other had diſpenſed with: Thus, the commerce of the great with men of letters too often concludes by ſome notorious rupture, a rupture which almoſt always proceeds from a forgetfulneſs of thoſe mutual duties, which were owing on one ſide or other, ſometimes on both.

Nevertheleſs I acknowledge, for the ſake of truth, and from no other motive whatſoever, there are ſome perſons of diſtinction who deſerve to be excepted; and if I was not apprehenſive their names and elogiums might look like an indirect and unjuſt ſatire upon thoſe whom I muſt omit, becauſe I do not know them, I would mention them here *. Their

* To ſpeak here only of ſtrangers; all who have known M. le marquis Lomellini, envoy extraordinary from the republic of Genoa,

familiarity needs not be ſuſpected, becauſe it is the effect of that eſteem they entertain for great talents,

Genoa, know, that truth only dictated this elogium, which the author made in his dedication of his Enquiry into the proceſſion of the equinoxes: "The greateſt geniuſes of antiquity prefixed "the names of their friends to their works, becauſe a friend "was dearer to them than a patron. A ſentiment ſo worthy of "you as this, is all I ſhall pretend to imitate them in. I am "not going to pay homage to your birth, that would be putting "your anceſtors in your place, and forgetting that I am writing "to a philoſopher. The reception you give to men of letters "does not permit them to ſee your ſuperiority of rank, becauſe "you do not envy their ſuperiority of knowledge. Not ſatisfied "with ſeeking their company, you ſhew them that real reſpect, "which will never miſlead them if they are worthy of it; and "as vanity has no ſhare in your eſteem for them, reputation "never impoſes on your judgment. I preſent theſe reſearches "to you as to a profound geometrician, who knows how to "unite the charms of wit with the ſublimeſt knowledge, and "whoſe praiſe I diſtinguiſh among the ſmall number of thoſe "whoſe encomiums do me honour."

If it be lawful to add to the elogium of ſtrangers that of the dead, which can never hurt the living, the author would mention, as a proof of the ſentiments of his heart, what he wrote in 1752, to a man whoſe memory ought to be dear to all men of letters, the marquis d'Argenſon, in the dedication of an Eſſay of a new theory on the reſiſtance; "Learned men and great writers, "who approach you in ſuch numbers, will applaud the homage "I pay you. The reſpect which they expreſs for you is the "more ſincere, as it is founded in attachment; and the more

and that ſincere pleaſure they find in the company of men of letters. Indeed, this ſociety is really the moſt uſeful and noble that a man who thinks can poſſibly wiſh for. If the ſciences ſooth the ſoul, they elevate it too: One of theſe qualities directly flows from the other, and it is an inconteſtible truth, (in ſpite of the heavy reproaches that have been made againſt men of letters) that they are not only ſuperior to other men in underſtanding, but are alſo generally leſs vicious in their ſentiments and conduct; as their deſires are more limited, they are more delicate about the means of gratifying them, and more grateful for favours conferred, becauſe the fewer obligations gra-

" juſt, as you do not demand it. You owe a ſentiment ſo true, " and yet ſo flattering, to that condeſcending familiarity with " which you treat men of talents, and which can alone render " the ſociety of the great and men of letters equally worthy of " each other. Your company, both uſeful and agreeable, from " that infinite variety of knowledge which ſecures to you the " voices of the moſt ſenſible part of the nation, is, to all who " ſurround you, a conſtant leſſon of modeſty, candour, and " public ſpirit, and all thoſe virtues which this age is content to " admire. In fine, a philoſopher in your ſentiments and your " conduct, you comprehend in this ſingular character a quality " ſtill more ſingular, that of poſſeſſing theſe talents without " oſtentation. May your example teach ſome of our Mecænas's " (now too much multiplied for the glory and advantage of let- " ters) that the true way of honouring merit is to protect it, is " to honour themſelves by the manner in which they diſtin- " guiſh it."

charge

titude has to fulfil, the more ſcrupulous it is to diſcharge them. M. Fouquet was abandoned in his diſgrace by all that got their fortunes under him. Two men of letters alone remained faithful, Fontaine and Peliſſon: Undoubtedly the number might have been more conſiderable; and I am ſorry not to be able to add to theſe two names thoſe of Moliere and the great Corneille; but, in ſhort, men of letters diſtinguiſhed themſelves on this occaſion, and the deſcendants of that miniſter cannot be too mindful of it.

The concluſion of all we have been ſaying is, that the only perſons of diſtinction, whoſe acquaintance ought to be cultivated by men of letters, are thoſe whom they can treat and eſteem, with the utmoſt confidence, as their equals and friends, and that all others are to be ſhunned without exception. Philoxenes, after he had heard the verſes of Dionyſius the tyrant, could ſay, "O that he would ſend me to the mines." How many men of letters, ſnatched from their obſcurity, and plunged all at once into a circle of courtiers, might cry out, almoſt at their entrance, "O "that they would reſtore me my ſolitude again." I never underſtood how the anſwer of Ariſtippus to Diogenes came to be admired: "If you had known "how to live with great men, you would never have "lived upon pulſe." Diogenes did not reproach him for living with great men, but for paying his court to a tyrant. That Diogenes who, in the midſt of poverty, was capable of braving the conqueror of Aſia, and who only wanted decency to make him a

model for wiſe men, was a philoſopher of antiquity the moſt cried down, becauſe his intrepid veracity rendered him the ſcourge of philoſophers themſelves; he was, in reality, one of thoſe who had the cleareſt knowledge of mankind, and the true value of things.

Every age, and eſpecially our own, ſtands in need of a Diogenes; but the difficulty is in finding men who have the courage to be one, and men who have patience to endure one.

Amongſt the great, who ſeem to hold men of letters in eſtimation, thoſe who have ſome pretenſions to a fine genius conſtitute a ſingular party; vanity inſpires them with theſe pretenſions, pride prevents them from ſhewing them to all the world. Notwithſtanding that general light with which our philoſophical age has been irradiated, there are ſome worthy men, more than is generally imagined, who do not think the quality of author, or profeſſor of literature, to be a title ſufficiently noble of itſelf. It muſt be confeſſed, the French nation has ſcarce ſhook off the yoke of that barbarity it has endured ſo long. This is not at all to be wondered at. Birth being an advantage which chance beſtows, it is natural not only to be willing to enjoy it, but ſtill further, to ſubject to it all thoſe whoſe acquiſitions are more painful. Pride and ſelf-love both find their account in this diſpoſition.

I know that the generality of the great exclaim againſt ſuch a reproach; but let them aſk their own conſciences; let them but give us leave to examine their converſations, and we ſhall remain convinced, that

that the name of the man of letters is regarded by them as but a ſubaltern title, which can only fall to the ſhare of an inferior rank; as if the art of inſtructing and enlightening mankind, next to that very rare one of governing them well, was not the moſt noble inveſtiture of humanity. A great prince, ſenſible, as it behoves him to be, to all kinds of glory, will be chiefly ſolicitous for that which ariſes from the talents of the mind, when he can attain it; becauſe he knows if it be not the moſt brilliant, it has at leaſt this invaluable advantage, that no perſon can challenge a ſhare with us.

To be convinced of the truth of what I have mentioned, the low opinion which is generally formed in the world concerning men of letters; it will be ſufficient to attend to that kind of reception they commonly meet with from it. It is pretty near of the ſame kind with that we give to certain agreeable profeſſions, which undoubtedly require talents, but which, in enquiring after them, we affect to degrade, as we honour other ſtates without knowing why. Indolence would be poſſeſſed of talents; and vanity finds means to ſeparate them from perſons. It is this which makes the part of men of letters, next to that of eccleſiaſtics, the moſt difficult to be acted in the world. One of theſe two profeſſions is ſituated betwixt the extremes of hypocriſy and ſcandal, and the other of pride and baſeneſs.—Muſt men of letters, then, utterly renounce the company of the great? Beſides the exceptions which I have made above to

this rule, ſome particular conſiderations make it neceſſary to moderate and reſtrain it.

Thoſe men of letters who can derive no advantage to the objects of their ſtudies, from a commerce with the world, ought to limit themſelves to that company (of what kind ſoever it be) where they will find the relaxation they want, in the ſweets of confidence and friendſhip. What end would our frivolous converſations anſwer to a philoſopher, except to coop up his genius, and deprive him of thoſe excellent ideas he would acquire by meditation and reading. It was not at the hotel de Rambouillet that Deſcartes diſcovered the application of algebra to geometry, nor at the court of Charles II. that Newton found out the principle of univerſal gravitation; and for the manner of writing, Malebranch, who lived in retirement, and whoſe amuſements were only the diverſion of a child, is by no means, in point of ſtile, the worſt model for philoſophers.

It is not the ſame with reſpect to thoſe whom we call fine geniuſes. To paint men in works of imagination, they muſt know them; to repreſent facts juſtly, they muſt not flatter themſelves they can gueſs at them; ſo much the worſe for thoſe of whom they do make random conjectures. A commerce with the world is abſolutely neceſſary for this kind of men of letters; but it were to be wiſhed, however, they would content themſelves with being bare ſpectators in this artificial ſociety, and ſpectators ſo attentive and obſervant as not to be obliged too often to return to a comedy, which is not always good enough to be ſeen over-again; that

that they would assist at the piece no more than the pit—who judge of the actors, and whom the actors dare not insult; in a word, that they should be of the same mind with Apollonius Thyaneus, who came to Rome once, in the reign of Nero, to see, as he said, what sort of an animal was a tyrant.

It is much to be desired, that those who take upon them to draw a picture of the age, whether by a piece for the theatre, or any other performance, would not satisfy themselves with borrowing its jargon and cant phrase. It is by this distorted and barbarous language, now days, that persons pretend to distinguish the authors who frequent what is called "Good company;" but who are, in reality, the worse for it, whatever may be imagined; and whose manner of writing, I appeal to experience, would be much better if the company they kept was less brilliant.

It belongs only to a small number of singular men to preserve themselves from this contagion; but it is very extraordinary that men of letters, formed for studying, knowing and fixing language, should, by a tacit agreement, submit to take the law in this point from the great, to whom they ought to prescribe it. In those days, when our language was only a fantastical mixture of the bad and good, the great writers saw into futurity, if I may speak so, and banished from their works those turns and words which they thought would soon grow old: this is what Pascal did in his Provincial Letters, a work which is read in our days, though composed one hundred years ago. At this time, when our language is degenerated

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and degraded, great writers will ſhew the ſame prophetical ſpirit in proſcribing from their writings the daily jingling of our ſets of good company. Perhaps it will become at laſt ſo ridiculous, that our authors will become more ridiculous than they, for having adopted it, and be obliged to return to the ſimple and the true.

One of the principal inconveniences ariſing from the ſociety of the great with men of letters, and yet at the ſame time one of the principal means by which the laſt propoſe to arrive at eſteem and conſideration, is the rage of patronizing, which has produced among us the Mæcenas's, as they are called. How would that favourite of Auguſtus be ſurpriſed to ſee his name ſo often profaned, and the abject ſituation in which men of letters ſtand, with reſpect to thoſe who wear this name! Horace wrote to Mæcenas, that is, to the greateſt nobleman of the greateſt empire that ever exiſted, upon terms of equality, which did honour to them both; and in a nation ſo poliſhed, ſo enlightened, ſo little enſlaved as ours pretends to be, a man of letters, who was to addreſs his protector as Horace addreſſed his, would be condemned by his fellow-writers.

The common form of our dedicatory epiſtles is one of thoſe things which have diſgraced letters. Almoſt every body is ringing the honour they do to letters, by protecting them, but never the honour they receive from them, nor the obligations they are under to reſpect them. It ſeems that baſeneſs and falſhood are the neceſſary perfections of theſe kinds of compoſitions;

ſitions; as if praiſes, beſtowed with nobleneſs of ſpirit, were not far more flattering to him who receives, and more honourable to him who gives them.

Are we to be ſurpriſed then that ſo many of moderate, but mean, talents, ſhould be celebrated at the expence of genius? The Orpheus of our nation, who in giving ſo rapid a change to the whole form of French muſic, prepared a revolution, which he could not help diſcovering ſome glimpſe of, was he not (to mention no other examples) the object of hatred and perſecution from a great number of Mæcenas's, for no other crime but being above their protection?

It is true, that excepting only a ſmall number of great perſonages ſo happy as to be fully ſenſible of the talents of this famous man, and ſo bold as to proclaim them, the reſt had not the ſatisfaction of ſeeing the public confirm their opinion, but ended their oppoſition, by reluctantly ſubſcribing to the judgment of the nation; a judgment which they would have prevented, if it had been in their power, had that illuſtrious artiſt deigned to make a ſhew of conſulting them upon muſic. His ſucceſs and his glory furniſh us with a ſtriking example of the truth of what we have advanced above, that the authority of men of letters always prevails at laſt. It is to their ſuffrage, next to himſelf, that a writer owes the reputation he enjoys, in ſpite of cabal and envy; not that we approve the fanaticiſm of ſome ſort of admirers. The eſteem of the wiſe is the moſt calm; but it is the property of great talents to make fanatics;

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and we muſt expect to meet with them in an age, when it is a kind of heroiſm to celebrate ſuperior genius, as naturally as we look for enthuſiaſts, flaggeliſts and convulſion-mongers among the ſects who are under perſecution.

Corneille, for the conſolation of great geniuſes who ſhall follow him be it remembered, was conſtantly perſecuted by almoſt all the lovers of that time, who had Scudery and Boiſrobert for their heroes. It muſt be ſo. Racine, who perhaps wanted nothing to make him capable of ſurpaſſing Corneille but to have lived like him, left no room for his adverſaries to attack him. That ſpirit of the courtier, which he had too much of, and which without Athalia, Phædra and Brittanicus, would have been a ſtain upon his glory, did not hinder him from ſuppreſſing the chagrin that came from thoſe whoſe protection he idolized, and to which he was enſlaved.

It ought to be, however, ſome ſatisfaction to perſecuted talents, to ſee how readily the public is pleaſed to reverſe the ſentence of pretended men of taſte. It is almoſt an infallible reprobation of a work, to envy their eſteem. They imagine, by proclaiming the talents of the authors they have eſpouſed, to inſpire a prepoſſeſſion in their favour. The nation, on the other hand, eſteeming every opportuniny of exerciſing its liberty an invaluable privilege, and perceiving a deſign to ſurpriſe or ſeize upon its ſuffrage by violence, is always the leaſt diſpoſed to give its conſent upon ſuch terms. It is the ſame with reſpect to works proclaimed before-hand, which are kept

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from the public a long time. The world cannot live upon expectation; the longer it has been disappointed, the more strictly it requires the effects to answer; and woe be to him that frustrates its hopes! It is not having recourse to such ridiculous and useless ostentation as this that will secure the success of a work, it must be by making severe and intelligent friends its judges in private, such as will never approve but when they cannot do otherwise; and whose opinion we readily submit to.

Hitherto I have only spoken of those lovers of sciences, who are content with supporting men of letters by the power of their credit, and the weakness of their suffrages; by a person of credit I mean, one who is solicitous to procure admirers, not one who has courage to enter the lists with formidable adversaries. Experience but too strongly proves, that persecuted talents have nothing to look for from this quarter: their patrons will soon be repulsed by their enemies. But men of letters, perhaps, imagine other resources are to be found in the wisdom of certain lovers of science, which we will divide into two classes.

The first contains those who know themselves too well to venture to appear in public, but who are not satisfied, like the rest of their brethren, with being absolute at dinner, and calling for the sublime from a poet, and discoveries from a learned man: they have further pretensions than these; even to enlighten their followers, to furnish them with plans for their works, and to direct them in the execution. I am surprised none of their defendants address them as some negotiators

tiators did Colbert, when he was inſtructing them, "Leave theſe things to us." This ſtateſman, who ſhewed his abilities in never ſpeaking upon a ſubject he did not underſtand, and in giving none but uſeful advice, ſhewed them too in taking it well, that men, better informed than himſelf, ſhould in this reſpect maintain their own judgment.

In the ſecond claſs of Mæcenas's are thoſe who aſpire to the glory of being authors themſelves. There are few who do not ſucceed in this enterprize, thanks to the adulation which enflames them; let them only be the adopted fathers of a work publiſhed in their name, a hundred pens are eager to applaud it, from the hero down to the Therſites in literature. All cry out, Here is a maſter-piece. Have they made but an almanack, it can be demonſtrated, they have found out the ſyſtem of the world.

This reproach is chiefly levelled at certain foreign journaliſts; (for I would hardly dare to ſay that there are any in France who deſerve it) with one hand they liſt up from their humble ſituations, ſtatues of clay, and with the other they vainly attempt to mutilate the golden ſtatues of great men, deſtitute of patronage and credit. In their periodical memoirs, which we may call, as Voltaire called hiſtory, immenſe archives of falſhood, and little repoſitories of truth; they commend every one but him who deſerves to be commended: thus the good things they ſay of bad books, diſgrace them even more than the injuſtice which they would inflict upon the good.

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The journaliſts I ſpeak of might be compared to thoſe mercenary ſubalterns appointed to collect the cuſtoms in great cities, who are inflexibly ſevere to the people, but paſs by great lords with reſpect; permit contraband trade to their friends, practiſe it frequently themſelves, while they greedily ſeize upon the property of others under this pretence. It is in vain to ſolicit of thoſe critics any thing ſo unreaſonable as flattery; but ſure we may be permitted to exhort them at leaſt to diſtinguiſh between the author and the work.

What moſt ſcandalouſly reflects upon the great and on literature, is that writers, who diſhonour themſelves by ſatire, ſhould find patrons ſtill more contemptible than they. The man of letters, who deſerves that name, equally diſdains, on his own account, to complain of the one, or to anſwer the other; but how little ſoever he is affected by the injuries themſelves, he will not be inattentive to the influence which lends them credit, if it be only for the ſake of forming a juſt idea of thoſe who condeſcend to be their protectors. In a place where the liberty of the preſs is not free, the liberty of abuſing men of letters by ſatire, is one proof of the little real eſteem they are held in, and the pleaſure there is in ſeeing them inſulted; for why is it more innocent to offer an indignity to a man of letters, who is an honour to his country, than to ridicule a man in a public ſtation, who is a ſcandal to it?

If it was imagined that all libels and ſatires were freely permitted; in this caſe, all ſtates and conditions

tions would indiſcriminately be the objects of them. We may ſay further, let perſonal ſatire be puniſhed as ſeverely as poſſible.

Thoſe who attack a perſon in the meaneſt rank of ſociety in his probity, in his manners, or in his condition, muſt anſwer for it; but let free liberty be given, in the face of the public, to eſtimate the talents of thoſe who protect, as well as thoſe who write; thoſe haughty and deſpicable perſons, who look upon men of letters as a kind of animals, deſtined to fight upon the arena for the pleaſure of the multitude, ſhould come down then from their amphitheatres, and let their judges take their places.

I cannot omit this opportunity of relating an anecdote, well enough to give an idea of the character and injuſtice of the men I ſpeak of. One of them turned into ridicule the exceſſive delicacy of a certain author, who had expreſſed ſome chagrin (perhaps too much) at ſome ſatires publiſhed againſt him. The ingenious author compoſed a ſong, in which the great man was delicately ridiculed: had he been capable of underſtanding the offence, the laws would not have been ſevere enough to have puniſhed ſo great an injury.

The laſt ſort of lovers of ſcience, who, for ſome reaſons, have a better title to be conſidered than the reſt, and who may be regarded as the real protectors of literature, are thoſe who ſeek to contribute to the progreſs of the ſciences and the arts by their benefactions.

I am ſorry for thoſe men of letters, whoſe fortune obliges them to fly to ſo ſad and dangerous a reſource.

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It is in their power, however, to conduct themſelves with ſo much dignity and nobleneſs of ſpirit, as to lay their very benefactors under obligation. I diſcharge, with intereſt, the kindneſs your father did me, ſaid the philoſopher to one of his diſciples; for I have been the cauſe of his being applauded all over the world.

The abbé De St. Pierre, once depriving himſelf of a conſiderable part of his fortune in favour of M. Varignon, ſaid to him, "I don't give you a penſion, "but the reverſe; I would make you independent of "me:" a piece of heroiſm well worthy of being propoſed as a model to all benefactors. This is the price which ſuch a title ſhould coſt; but how few would wiſh to purchaſe it on the ſame conditions!

What a leſſon does this example of the Abbé afford to certain benefactors, often as covetous as vain, who think themſelves the fathers of literature, for ſome few ſlight favours far beneath their fortune, which they take care ſecretly to divulge? When they have obliged worthy men, they ought not to ſpeak to them of gratitude; that principle knows how to impoſe upon itſelf laws ſufficiently ſevere. But mankind are ſo attentive to ſeize upon every thing that may give them a ſuperiority over their equals, that a benefit conferred is commonly regarded as a kind of claim or purchaſe-money for him whom we have obliged; an act of ſovereignty which is abuſed to make perſons miſerable in their dependence. Much has been written, and with juſtice, againſt the ungrateful; but ſuch benefactors as theſe have been left in repoſe; and

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they would furnish a chapter, which is wanting to the history of tyrants *.

Thus, to a well-born mind, the greatest obstacle to opulence is the exercise of its own essential rights.

* The author, though he declares this sad truth, is far from thinking gratitude a restraint; on the other hand, he has given lasting proofs of his own to the only man in place to whom he owed it, the count d'Argenson, in his dedication of his new treatise De Dynamique. "The favourable reception (says he) which "the learned have given to this work, encourages me to present "it to you. I could wish to have rendered it worthy of posterity, "for the sake of transmitting down to it the only testimony I can "give of my attachment and gratitude. There is no truth in this "book dearer to me than so noble and just a sentiment as this. "The less I have sought after benefactors, the more mindful "should I be of those who have generously offered me their patro- "nage, and the favours of majesty, which are never out of my "mind, always bring to my remembrance the minister who pro- "cured them. May the sciences, Sir, always faithful in pre- "serving the names of those who have loved them, celebrate in "a manner worthy of France and you, those establishments so "glorious to your ministry, which leave your successors the ho- "nour of cultivating them. May you retire from the world, "enjoy in peace the happiness a private life can give, in remov- "ing from you too near a view of the miseries of mankind. "Such are the wishes of a citizen, who will always interest him- "self in your felicity, and who now, for the first time, cannot "help complaining, that his situation is not more exalted to "enable him to give more eclat to his applause."

Abso-

Abſolute indigence is a ſurer road to places and riches; becauſe ſlavery is what it has always been accuſtomed to. The neceſſity of delivering itſelf from extreme miſery, while it renders all means excuſable, inſenſibly familiarizes them to the mind: ſo that they can be uſed afterwards with leſs reluctance in enlarging their fortune. Theſe perſons are diſciplined by diſguſts and rebuffs; and they think of nothing farther than to find their account from the unhappy habitude of ſwallowing them. How diſagreeable, not to ſay debaſing, does the pride and deſpotiſm of benefactors render their favours! How miſchievous are bounties, even to perſons of real abilities, when abjectly received! They communicate to the mind a degree of abjectneſs which inſenſibly ſinks its ideas, and at length infects his writings: for the ſtyle takes its tincture from the character. Are you ſublime in your ſentiments? your manner of writing will be firm and noble. I don't deny but there may be exceptions to this rule, as there are to many other; but theſe exceptions will be a kind of phænomena.

The Roman could cry out, "Bread and ſhews!" how deſirable would it be if men of letters could cry out "Bread and liberty!" I ſpeak of liberty not only in their perſons, but in their writings. I don't mean to confound it with that criminal licence which attacks what it ought to reverence. True courage is that which combats vice and follies, keeps perſons in awe, and obeys the laws of LIBERTY. TRUTH, and POVERTY, (poverty I ſay; for if this be dreaded, the former will be abſent) ought to be always before

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the eyes of men of letters, as POSTERITY ſhould be before ſovereign princes.

When I ſay that poverty ought to be one of the words of this device for men of letters, I don't pretend to aſſert that it is equally neceſſary for them to be poor, as it is for them to be true and free, and that poverty forms an eſſential circumſtance in their condition; I only maintain that they ought not to fear it. It would be unjuſt to forbid them riches; for why has not a man of letters the ſame right to opulence as ſo many others, who are either uſeleſs, or hurtful to their country, whoſe ſcandalous luxury is an inſult upon the public miſery? But if a man of letters ambitiouſly ſeeks after fortune, (as one of our moſt illuſtrious writers obſerved very juſtly) he deſerves to get one; and why ſhould it be imagined ſo very difficult to get one, even by honourable methods? We can produce, in the hiſtory of philoſophy, one, who being reproached by his enemies for deſpiſing riches, becauſe he had not the abilities to acquire them, applied himſelf to commerce, enriched himſelf by it in one year, and then turned philoſopher again.

If it be eaſy to make a fortune by honourable methods, it muſt be ſtill more eaſy to attain it when perſons can ſcruple at nothing. For this purpoſe, it requires nothing more than a ſtrongly determined reſolution to ſucceed by patience and boldneſs: perhaps it is the only ſucceſs which affords no proof of any kind of genius; for a genius of intrigue and dexterity is not worthy of that name; it is the genius of thoſe who have no other, and wiſh for none beſide. It is by making

making a long and succesful use of this so very common a talent, that persons without merit, and without name, are able to arrive at very large fortunes, and considerable employments. England only has this honour to boast of, that her men of letters have advanced themselves, by their genius, to the highest stations; with us such merit is generally a sufficient motive to exclude them, and, perhaps, this is no misfortune to learning. In general, there are not a set of more implacable enemies in the world to letters, than those who have made their fortune by them, or by the appearance of them. Elated with favour, these middling men are sensible, that good judges must behold them in their true situation, and therefore they can never forgive them.

Nevertheless, this rule is not entirely a general one. Among the different Mecenas's of our age, some are to be found, who, being enriched by letters, take under their protection learned men of inferior note and fortune. But, to see the manner in which they treat them, one would be tempted to think, that the name of republic of letters was a very ill contrived one, as nothing can be less republican than their conduct and manner of behaving to their equals. They seem to be persuaded, they are the only persons who deserve to be rich; and, at the same time that they complain of their own indigence in the midst of a very genteel fortune, should you mention a man of letters destitute of necessaries, they won't fail to represent him in very easy circumstances. "Thou hast reason, Diogenes

" would have anſwered, I wiſh I could but ſee thee a " ſingle day in my place."

The Mæcenas's I ſpeak of have adopted a favourite maxim, that men of letters ought to be poor: the reaſon they give is, that neceſſity ſharpens genius, while wealth benumbs and enfeebles the exerciſe of it; but their true motive is, by this circumſtance, to have a more numerous and dirty levee to flatter them.

I muſt confeſs, that they have ſometimes been puniſhed, and it is not very uncommon to ſee theſe tyrants in literature, after being celebrated by foreigners as well as Frenchmen, at laſt outlive their literary reputation, when a change of circumſtances diſables them from doing either good or harm any longer.

It is upon a principle nearly the ſame with this pretended neceſſity, of keeping men of letters in a ſtate of dependence, that we have ſeen, in ſome of our famous academies, that ſpirit of deſpotiſm prevail, which, I dare ſay, would have been very pernicious to the progreſs of ſcience, had it not been for the ſuperior talents of many members of thoſe companies; for, in a deſpotic ſtate, the virtues of a citizen are the virtues of a dupe; they muſt know how to be bubbled ſometimes, and perſons of ſuch qualifications may be found in plenty every where.

The Cardinal Richlieu gave to the French academy a very ſimple and a very noble form, but then it was Cardinal Richlieu. He was ſenſible, notwithſtanding the ſyſtem of deſpotiſm of which he was full, and which he had extended ſo far, that a Democratic form

form was moſt ſuitable to ſuch a ſtate as that of the republic of letters, which lives only by liberty: that ſingular man, who underſtood the value of talents, determined that, in the French academy, genius ſhould walk in the ſame line by the ſide of rank and nobility, and that all titles there ſhould give way to that of the man of letters. He was deſirous that this academy ſhould be almoſt entirely compoſed of the beſt writers in the nation, to give an ornament to it in the eyes of the wiſe; and a ſmall number of diſtinguiſhed noblemen, to make it ſplendid to the people; and that the laſt ſhould only be brought in to ſupply the places which great writers might leave vacant; and thus that, in the French academy, prejudices ſhould contribute to do honour to abilities, and not abilities to flatter prejudices; and eſpecially, that attention ſhould be paid to exclude thoſe, who, all at once pretending to be great authors and great lords, had no title to either. He little imagined, that one day a certain ſet of men would be offended to ſee themſelves in the French academy betwixt Deſpreau and Racine, a place which Mæcenas himſelf would have thought an honour, and which he would have filled with modeſty. In a word, Cardinal Richlieu eaſily perceived, that it was too dangerous to eſtabliſh, in literary companies, a ſpirit of inequality, ſo likely to create diſturbance, to repulſe great talents, to fill that illuſtrious ſociety at length with mediocrity, and to expoſe literary rewards too much to the mercy of caprice and envy.

But, to speak the truth, these recompences are not of such absolute necessity to the progress of letters, as is imagined even in our nation. Corneille, Fontain, and several others, had them not: apparently without them Racine wrote his tragedies, and Despreau his art of poetry; without them our age has produced the Henriad, the Spirit of Laws, Hippolytus and Aricia, and many fine works of the same authors, and of others. Great talents require no other principles but the impulse of nature to unfold them. It is this, and not fortune, which forms a great man; it was this which, in the midst of civil wars, peopled Flanders with poor, but able painters; it was this which gave to Italy so many celebrated artists, of which but a small number liv'd in affluence. In fact, with talents and genius nature is pleased, if I may so express it, to open, from time to time, mines, which she absolutely closes up again afterwards, and that for many ages. She diverts herself equally with the injustice of fortune and of mankind: she raises up singular geniuses in the midst of a barbarous people, as she produces precious plants among savage nations, who are ignorant of their virtues.

Nevertheless, it is a mistake to assert, without restriction, that ill distributed rewards always discourage superior geniuses; they are serviceable sometimes to produce great performances from those who never obtain them, and who must labour not to attain them, but to deserve them. Such is the principal utility resulting from these premiums, especially when they are distributed in a promiscuous and plentiful manner.

Far

Far be it from us then to wish to dry up this source. The discouragement which such a conduct would introduce (for a time at least) among men of letters, would, in my opinion, be a greater mischief than the homages, not to say idolatry, which interest obliges them to pay; and I am not for imitating that foolish emperor, who destroyed the library of Constantinople, because the men of letters of his empire worshipped images; I only think literary recompences should be less frequent. This would be the means of bringing them to be dispensed with more propriety: by so doing men would be confined to their particular province; favours being more difficultly acquired, would be disputed by none but those who are capable of meriting them; and celebrated writers, philosophers and artists, would find elsewhere, in the esteem of their country, a premium sufficiently flattering to reconcile them to wait for other rewards, or to smile at those by whom they were deprived of them.

But what is never to be forgotten by the great, if they would promote the cause of literature, is, that personal consideration is the only genuine reward of talents, that which gives a value to every other, or rather which supplies their place. It was this which Greece paid to the great men whom she produced of every kind; this is the inestimable reward which letters receive at this day from a monarch who fills the throne with the wisdom and virtue of a Julian, without his superstition. The indifference of Charles V. to literature, transmitted to his descendants, seems to be one of the principal causes which has retarded the

progress of genius in his dominions. Prussia, on the other hand, will be for ever indebted to Frederick for that progress she has made in science and arts. Superior to prejudice, merit alone, with him, was the distinction of mankind: light and truth, so necessary, yet so much concealed from most princes, are the fruits of that noble and philosophical liberty, which he affords to literature. Genius, misfortune and philosophy are a sufficient title to his bounty: his taste for the sciences and the fine arts is as eminent as it is true, and the more to be applauded, as he does not sacrifice to them more important concerns, and knows how to be a monarch better than any thing else.

As the elogiums he has received are not confined to the suffrages of his subjects, but ratified by all Europe, whose unanimous voice is the test of the merit of princes, they will be confirmed by the judgment of future ages, which we may venture to anticipate, because there is no reason to fear it. Will he then accept the feeble, but disinterested homage of a man of letters, whose pen has not yet been dishonoured by flattery, who had no hopes, when he wrote this encomium, of being admitted one day to thank him for his favours, whom friendship still detains in his own country, for he holds it dearer than fortune, and who never desired any thing of him but his esteem?

Would to God, for the honour of our nation, I could not have said so much of our Mæcenas's, but truth and justice check'd my good will, and forbad my silence. I can, however, honestly protest, that I never

never intended to apply the critical reflections, contained in this essay, to any one person in particular: if, contrary to my design, some one should think he can discover his own features in this picture, I shall give him no other answer, but that of Protogenes to Demetrius, "I cannot believe you would proclaim war with the arts;" for an ill-advised patronage of the ingenious is, in reality, an hostile attempt against them. Happy would men of letters be, if they were at last convinced, that the surest means of making themselves respected, is to live in the closest harmony and friendship with each other; that by this union they would become capable of giving the law to the rest of the nation, in matters of taste and philosophy; that true esteem is that which is dispensed by those who are worthy to be esteemed themselves; that quackery, in short, is a farce which degrades the spectator and the actor; and that the thirst for reputation and riches is one of the causes which contributes most to the decline of letters among us.

These are the reflexions and views of a writer without artifice and without intrigue, without patronage, and consequently without hope, but happily without care. I have endeavoured to explain myself freely, though without caprice, upon the different objects which form the matter of this essay. I am, and I ought to be, less suspected on this account, as being engaged in a career not very brilliant, but calm, in which the number of judges, of enemies, and flatterers, is very small. I do myself the justice of not aspiring to places or literary recompences, as I have not the ho-

nour to be any man's dependant or rival, as I have seen too many Mæcenas's and great personages, not to find something to commend, and too few not to have something to complain of.

The fate of this work, when it first appeared, was absolutely different from what I expected; some persons of distinction honoured it with their encomiums; some men of letters pulled it in pieces: the first saw in it nothing but a respectable pride, the last nothing but a mutinous vanity. The public must judge whether the former have done me more justice than the latter. My zeal would be sufficiently repaid, if those, who have censured me most, would practise the maxims they have dictated to me. Letters, in my opinion, would then meet with more respect, and be more deserving of it; I know that the false interests of men are always opposite to their true interests. In this case I shall not be the first missionary, who, with moderate talents, but very good intentions, with reasons still better, and a conduct conformable to his doctrine, has had the misfortune to make no proselytes.

Some of the more celebrated and accomplished of our fine geniuses may propagate these doctrines with better success. Let me, escaped from a tumultuous sea, over which I have only been a passenger, give this piece of advice to men of letters, "Parcite oves "nimium procedere, non bene ripæ creditur; ipse "aries etiam nunc vellera siccat."

REFLEX-

REFLEXIONS ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF PHILOSOPHY IN MATTERS THAT ARE PROPERLY RELATIVE TO TASTE*.

THE philoſophical ſpirit, ſo celebrated by one part of our nation, and ſo decried by another, has produced different, and even contrary, effects, according as we conſider it with reſpect to the ſciences, or in relation to the belles lettres. Operating in the ſphere of ſcience, to which it properly belongs, it has ſet limits to that paſſion for explaining all things which aroſe from the towering pride of ſyſtem; but entering into the circle of belles lettres, it has preſumed, on the contrary, to analyze our pleaſures, to call before its tribunal the more elegant feelings of the human mind, and to ſubmit to its examination the various objects of taſte. If the wiſe moderation, which has been obſerved, in theſe latter times, by philoſophers in matters of ſcience, has met with much contradiction; is it ſurpriſing that the encroaching ſpirit of the new adventurers in literature has alſo been oppoſed? This philoſophical ſpirit, applied to the objects of taſte, muſt undoubtedly diſpleaſe ſuch of our writers as imagine, that, in matters of taſte, as well as in thoſe of a more ſerious kind, every paradox ought to be rejected, every new opinion baniſhed, and that, merely becauſe it is new. This way of thinking, however,

* Theſe reflexions were read by Mr. D'Alembert before the French academy, the 14th of March, 1757.

appears to me both unreasonable and pernicious; we cannot extend too far the liberty of examining, judging, and inventing in matters of speculation and literary amusement, even though, in many cases, that liberty should be utterly unsuccessful in its efforts. The flight of genius must be unrestrained, since it is often in the midst of its wildest excursions that it creates the true sublime. Such also is the case with the faculty of reason, or the philosophical spirit. Let us therefore permit this discerning spirit to extend indiscriminately, though sometimes without success, its inspection to all the objects of our pleasures, and by that means put it in a capacity of striking out new paths, and conducting genius itself into unknown regions.

One of the great advantages of philosophy in its application to matters of taste, is its being so admirably adapted to cure, or to prevent, that excessive veneration for a certain class of authors, which we may call by the name of literary superstition. It will justify our esteem of the antients by rendering that esteem rational, and reducing it within its proper bounds; it will prevent our admiring them in their defects; it will shew us their equals in several of our modern writers, who, because they have followed the models exhibited by the antients, are so unreasonably modest as to esteem themselves inferior to their masters. But it will be asked, whether this method of analysing metaphysically matters of feeling and sentiment, will not be attended with many inconveniences? Whether it will not often engage us to enquire into the reasons of things which have no reason at all, damp our pleasure

ſure by leading us into the cuſtom of diſcuſſing coldly what was deſigned by nature to touch and to inflame, and put ſuch ſhackles upon true genius, as to render it ſervilely timorous, and check its enterpriſing ardor? Let us endeavour to give a ſatisfactory anſwer to theſe important queſtions.

Taſte, though far from being generally poſſeſſed, yet it is by no means an arbitrary thing. This is a truth acknowledged on all ſides, both by thoſe who reduce taſte to mere feeling and perception, and by thoſe alſo who would bring it within the ſphere of reaſoning and diſcuſſion. But we muſt obſerve at the ſame time, that all the beauties and perfections which appear in the productions of nature or of art, are not properly the objects of taſte, whoſe perceptions are leſs extenſive than many are apt to imagine. There are certain charms of a ſublime and ſtriking kind, which equally affect all obſervers, and of which, conſequently, all the various orders of mankind, in all ages and nations of the world, are competent judges. But there is alſo another ſpecies of beauty, which only affects thoſe minds that are poſſeſſed of a certain delicacy of feeling, and which remains imperceptible to vulgar ſpirits. The beauties which belong to this claſs, are beauties only of a ſecond order; becauſe objects, which excite the idea of grandeur, ſurpaſs thoſe which affect us only by their gracefulneſs and elegance. The charms however of this ſecond claſs of objects are thoſe, which it requires the moſt ſagacity to diſcern, and the greateſt delicacy to feel truly; and accordingly they abound moſt in thoſe nations

where ſocial intercourſe has contributed to the perfection of the arts, and multiplied the ſources of pleaſure and enjoyment. It is then in this claſs of beauty, which is adapted to the contemplation of the diſcerning few, that we are properly to look for the objects of taſte. Theſe obſervations lead us naturally to define taſte, as the faculty of diſtinguiſhing, in the works of art, the various qualities which are adapted to excite pleaſure or diſguſt, in minds that are ſuſceptible of delicate ſentiments and perceptions.

If, then, taſte be not an arbitrary thing, it muſt be founded on fixed and evident principles, by the application of which, we may form a deciſive judgment of all the various productions of art. The truth is, that the ſource of our pleaſures and of our diſguſts lies ſolely and intirely within ourſelves; ſo that, if we reflect with attention upon our mental frame, we ſhall find there general and invariable rules of taſte, which will ſerve as the criterion of beauty and deformity, in all the objects, which the fecundity of the different arts preſents to our view. From hence it follows, that the ſame philoſophical ſpirit, which obliges us, for want of ſufficient evidence, to ſuſpend every moment our enquires about the nature and qualities of thoſe objects that are without us, ought, on the contrary, to animate our reſearches with reſpect to the objects and the nature of taſte, which lies obvious to our examination, as it exiſts within us, and conſtitutes a part of our mental frame. The true philoſopher will, at the ſame time, eaſily perceive that this examination muſt be confined within proper limits. We

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muſt never, in our reſearches upon any ſubject, flatter ourſelves with the hopes of riſing to Firſt Principles, which a thick veil perpetually conceals from the eyes of mortals. To inveſtigate the primitive and metaphyſical cauſe of our various pleaſures, would be as chimerical a project, as to attempt explaining the operation of external objects upon our ſenſes. But as the origin of our knowledge has been reduced to a ſmall number of ſenſations; ſo the ſources of thoſe pleaſures, that are relative to taſte, may be traced out by a few evident obſervations upon the manner in which we perceive and feel. Thus far the true ſage extends his reſearches; but here alſo he ſtops, and deſcends from hence, as from firſt principles, to thoſe conſequences that reſult from his accurate obſervations.

In analyſing taſte, we ſhall find many qualities neceſſary to the proper exerciſe of that perceptive power, which eſcape the notice of inattentive obſervers. It does not conſiſt wholly in accuracy and rectitude of judgment, however rare and precious this quality may be, nor yet in a delicate ſenſibility alone. No: there is yet, further, a conſiderable aſſemblage of ſenſes and powers (if I may ſo ſpeak) which enters into its compoſition, and which we muſt therefore carefully take into the account. A few examples will illuſtrate this obſervation. When we read a ſublime piece of poetry, what are the powers and faculties of our nature to which the bard addreſſes himſelf? They are various; ſometimes he ſpeaks to our imagination, ſometimes to our affections, ſometimes to our reaſon,

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but always to the external ſenſe or organ of hearing. Verſe is a ſpecies of harmony, with reſpect to which the ear is too delicate to admit of the leaſt defect; ſo that reaſon itſelf, upon ſome occaſions, is obliged to make certain ſacrifices to rhime. A philoſopher, then, with all his penetration and delicacy of ſentiment, will be an incompent judge of poetry, if he has not a good ear. He will aſſert, that the pleaſures which reſult from poetic harmony are merely chimerical; that all authors, of whatever kind their productions may be, ought to addreſs themſelves alone to the underſtanding and the heart; nay, by captious reaſonings, he will caſt an apparent ridicule upon the care and induſtry, which are employed in arranging words and periods, ſo as to render them harmonious and pleaſing to the ear. Thus a natural philoſopher, who poſſeſſed no other external ſenſe but that of feeling, would hold it as a thing impoſſible, that diſtant objects ſhould operate upon our bodily organs, and would prove his aſſertion by ſophiſtical arguments, to which no ſatisfactory anſwer could be given, as long as he was deprived of ſight and hearing. Such is the caſe of that philoſopher, who, without a delicate ear, pretends to have a taſte for poetry. He imagines he does no real injury to a poem, when, by tranſpoſing the words, he deſtroys their harmony and cadence, and he will attribute the languor and flatneſs, which the poem acquires by this change, to the power of prejudice and cuſtom, to which he acknowledges his own involuntary ſubjection. He will never once imagine, that, by breaking the meaſure, and tranſpoſing

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the words, he has destroyed the delightful harmony that resulted from their metrical arrangement and proportions. To judge, however, properly of such a conduct, we have only to ask ourselves, what we should think of a musician, who, to prove that the pleasure of melody is founded in opinion, and not in nature, should spoil a fine air, by destroying the symmetry of the sounds, of which it was composed?

It is not thus that the true philosopher will judge of the pleasures that arise from poetry. Avoiding wisely all extremes, he will neither attribute them entirely to nature on the one hand, nor wholly to opinion on the other. He will observe, that, as all nations are, more or less, agreeably affected with the charms of music in general, though they may not all delight in the same particular kinds of melody; so, in like manner, they are all, in general, susceptible of pleasure from poetic harmony, though the poetry of one people may differ extremely from that of another. It is by examining attentively this difference, that the true sage will be able, at length, to determine how far the pleasures we receive from poetry and music are influenced by habit; what real additions they derive from thence, and what imaginary ones they receive from opinion. For he will ever distinguish between that pleasure, which is the result of habit, and that which is arbitrary, and merely founded on opinion; a distinction hitherto not sufficiently attended to, in treating this subject, but which, notwithstanding, daily experience sufficiently justifies. There are certain pleasures that strike us immediately, and that pervade

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the ſoul the very moment that their objects are preſented; there are others, which require time to produce their proper effect; which are received with indifference or diſguſt, until the mind has been modified by their action upon it to a certain degree, and are then enjoyed with the quickeſt ſenſations of delight. How often has it happened, that a piece of muſic which we have heard, for the firſt time, without any agreeable emotion, has excited afterwards in us the moſt extatic raptures, when, by its being often repeated, the ear has been at length able to diſtinguiſh its complicated charms, and to perceive the whole delicacy and force of its expreſſion?

This is a ſtriking inſtance of the pleaſures which ariſe from habit, and which muſt by no means be looked upon as arbitrary, becauſe they may be, at firſt, received with indifference, and have the force of prejudice againſt them.

Thus a philoſophical connoiſſeur will be careful to maintain every faculty and every ſenſe in their reſpective privileges, and to attribute to a good ear the authority that belongs to it, in deciding concerning the merit of poetical compoſitions. But, at the ſame time, he will be far from thinking, that the poet's attention to pleaſe the external ſenſe can juſtify his diſpenſing with the more important obligation of ſatisfying the reaſon and imagination of his readers, by the juſtneſs of his ideas, and the ſublimity of his views. As he is perſuaded that the firſt and moſt important rule of good writing requires a conformity between the ſtyle of an author, and the matter which

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he treats, ſo nothing will diſguſt him more than common and trivial ideas expreſſed with affectation, and adorned with the vain pomp and harmony of poetry. A plain and eaſy proſe will, in his opinion, be preferable to ſuch numbers as derive their principal merit from their cadence, and little or none from the truths and ſentiments which they are employed to embelliſh and ſet off. Feelingly ſenſible alſo of the charms of poetic imagery, he is, on that very account, pleaſed with ſuch images alone, as are new and ſtriking; and yet even to theſe he will prefer, without heſitation, thoſe beautiful ſentiments which unfold, in a noble and affecting manner, truths that are uſeful to mankind.

It muſt, however, be carefully obſerved, that though a philoſopher be poſſeſſed of all that variety of ſenſes and faculties that enter into the compoſition of true taſte, yet this is not all that is required in the matter now under conſideration; it is farther neceſſary, that the exerciſe of theſe faculties be not too much confined to one particular ſet of objects. The famous Malebranche could not read the moſt ſublime verſes, without a certain wearineſs and diſguſt; and yet his ſtyle abounds with all the grand characters of poetry, and is full of imagination, ſentiment, and harmony; but his imagination, entirely occupied about matters purely intellectual, confined its energy to the creation of philoſophical ſyſtems; and the high degree of feeling and vivacity with which he was endued, only ſerved to make him embrace with ardor, as truth, what was no more than mere hypotheſis. Though his proſe was extremely harmonious, yet

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poetical harmony had no charms to him; which may perhaps be owing to one of the following reasons: either that the sensibility of his ear was confined to the harmony of prose, or that a mechanical and natural talent enabled him to write harmonious prose without his perceiving it, just as his imagination had served him in philosophy without his knowledge, or as a musical instrument produces, without consciousness, well-proportioned sounds.

It is not only to a want of delicacy in the mind, or of sensibility in the external organs of perception, that we are to impute all erroneous judgments in matters of taste. The pleasure we receive from any excellent production of art, is, or may be derived from different sources. The true philosophical analysis consists therefore, in distinguishing well these various sources, and keeping them separate from each other, that so we may refer to each what properly belongs to it, and may not attribute our pleasures to causes that have had no sort of influence in their production. It has been observed, that the rules of each art should be taken from the most excellent compositions which each respective art has furnished; and the observation is undoubtedly just. It is not, however, by the confused aggregate of pleasure, by the collective result of the agreeable perceptions, which these compositions have produced in us, that we are to fix the rules of taste; but by that reflex act of the mind, which enables us to distinguish the particular passages that excited in us delightful sensations, from those which were only designed as shades in the piece, or as resting

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places for the exhauſted attention of the reader, and alſo from thoſe where the author has exhibited marks of involuntary negligence. For want of obſerving this method, the imagination, warmed by certain beauties of the nobleſt kind, which may ſhine forth in a work, otherwiſe full of the moſt monſtrous defects, will gradually become inſenſible of theſe defects; nay, will transform them into beauties, and conduct us at length to that ſtupid enthuſiaſm, which, by admiring every thing indiſcriminately, perceives, or rather feels nothing truly. Thus, by a confuſed and mechanical impreſſion, many will be led either to eſtabliſh falſe rules of taſte, or, what is equally pernicious, to ſubſtitute arbitrary notions in the place of fixed principles; to contract the ſphere of the arts; to preſcribe bounds to our pleaſures, in order to render them inſipidly uniform, and to confine the efforts of genius and induſtry within a narrow circle.

It is the province of philoſophy to break theſe inglorious bonds aſunder; but ſhe cannot be too circumſpect in the choice of the arms, by which this noble deliverance is to be accompliſhed. The late Monſ. de la Motte maintained, that verſification was not eſſential to dramatical compoſitions; but to prove an opinion ſo ſuſceptible of a rational defence, he injudiciouſly launched into paradox, wrote againſt poetry in general, and thereby did nothing but injury to his cauſe: he might as well have wrote againſt muſic of every kind, in order to prove, that the chorus is not eſſential to tragedy. This ingenious writer was under no neceſſity of combating the prejudices of the public againſt

againſt his opinion, by ſuch ſenſeleſs paradoxes. There was, methinks, a much ſhorter way of proving his point, and that was, to have compoſed his celebrated tragedy of Inés de Caſtro in proſe; the affecting nature of a ſubject ſo tenderly intereſting, ſhould have encouraged him to venture upon this innovation, and thus the theatre would have been enriched with a new ſpecies of dramatic poetry. But an ambitious deſire of being diſtinguiſhed from the crowd, leads men ſometimes to combat, in theory, received opinions, while a timorous ſelf-love, that dreads all new and dangerous attempts, through the apprehenſion of miſcarrying, obliges them to follow thoſe very opinions in practice. It is here that we may obſerve a conſiderable difference between the philoſopher and the legiſlator; the latter diſpenſes, in his private conduct, with the laws which he impoſes upon others; while the philoſopher obſerves in his work, the rules which he condemns in his preface.

The two ſources of error which we have been hitherto conſidering, viz. the want of ſenſibility, on the one hand, and the want of that reflexion, which is requiſite to diſtinguiſh the true cauſes of our pleaſure, on the other, will be the occaſion of perpetuating that tedious controverſy, ſo often renewed, and ſo injudiciouſly carried on, the merit of the ancients. Their advocates, under the impulſe of an enthuſiaſtic admiration, are too prone to exalt their productions upon the whole, on account of the ſtriking beauties that appear in ſome of the parts; while their adver-

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faries refuſe thoſe applauſes that are due to the parts, on account of the defects that appear in the whole.

There is, however, another error, into which the philoſophical critic is more liable to fall; and to avoid which, he muſt conſequently employ his principal attention. This error conſiſts in applying to the peculiar objects of taſte, principles, which, though true in themſelves, yet have no relation to theſe objects. Every one is acquainted with thoſe lines in the tragedy of the Horatii,

Que voulez vous qu'il fit contre trois? Qu'il mourut.
Ou qu'un beau deſeſpoir alors le ſecurût*.

* To enable thoſe, who don't underſtand the French language, to enter into the true ſpirit of this ingenious criticiſm, it will be proper to obſerve, that in Corneille's tragedy of the Horatii, a meſſenger arrives to inform the old Horatius, that two of his ſons were killed, and that the third was flying from the three Curiatii. The venerable old man is filled with indignation at the conduct of his remaining ſon. The meſſenger, to excuſe him, addreſſes himſelf thus to the incenſed father: "What other re-"ſource had he than flight, overpowered as he was by three "combatants?" "A glorious death (replies the old Horatius) "or that ſuccour that is adminiſtred by a noble deſpair." Theſe words, A glorious death, which are equivalent to Qu'il mourut, conclude the firſt line in the French, and give us a ſtriking inſtance of the true ſublime. What follows is cenſured by Mr. d'Alembert, for the excellent reaſons offered in his elegant obſervations on this paſſage.

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The heroic expreſſion of the aged father Qu'il mourut, has been juſtly and univerſally admired; and the following verſe as juſtly and univerſally condemned; and yet the common principles of metaphyſics will furniſh arguments, or rather ſophiſms, to juſtify this verſe, againſt all the rules of true taſte. It will be alledged, for inſtance, that this ſecond verſe is neceſſary to expreſs all the feelings that paſſed in the mind of the old Horatius; for though it was his duty to prefer the death of his ſon to a life of diſhonour; yet it was ſtill more natural to wiſh that his ſon might eſcape by the means of his valour, and that, animated by a noble deſpair, he might ſtand alone againſt his three adverſaries, and return victorious from the combat. This defence, however plauſible upon metaphyſical principles, is abſolutely miſapplied in the caſe before us, where the queſtion is not concerning the mere expreſſion of truth and nature, but concerning ſuch expreſſions of both as are ſtriking and ſublime. According to the reaſoning of the metaphyſical critic, the ſecond verſe, as it contains the ſentiment that is the moſt natural of the two, ſhould have preceeded the firſt, which, by that means, would have loſt the greateſt part of its force. Beſides, nothing is more feeble, flat, and frigid than this ſecond verſe, even when reſtored to its true and natural place. For where is the neceſſity for the old Horatius's expreſſing the deſire which that verſe contains? Will not every one ſuppoſe, without difficulty, that it would have been infinitely more rejoicing to him to have ſeen his ſon living, and crowned with victory, than falling a victim

victim to the superior force of his enemies? The poet then had no occasion to express a desire, which every one must suppose: the only sentiment which suited that violent state of emotion, in which the venerable old man now was, the only affection which was proper to be discovered upon such an occasion, and in circumstances where the glory of his country and of his name were immediately concerned, was that heroic courage, which engaged him to choose for his son a noble death, rather than a life of dishonour and infamy. The cold and tardy reasonings of slow and phlegmatic spirits are very different from the sudden and prodigious bounds, which minds, nobly fired, make towards the true sublime; the latter disdaining to remain, even for a moment, in the sphere of vulgar sentiments, understand much more than they express, and soar with a rapid flight to those sentiments and passions that carry the strongest marks of energy and grandeur. Their progress resembles that of one of Homer's gods, whose fourth stride brought him from one end of the universe to the other.

Thus, then, it happens, that, in matters of taste, the demi-philosopher (if I may employ that term) leads us from the paths of truth and nature, to which it is the province of true philosophy to restore our wandering steps. It is therefore an injury done both to the belles letters and to philosophy, to imagine that they are either incompatible with, or prejudicial to, each other. Whatever relates to our ideas and perceptions, and even to our sentiments and feelings, is the true domain, the proper sphere of philosophy. It

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would therefore be as unreasonable to confine her to the heavenly bodies, or to the material system of the universe, as it would be to limit poetry to the praises of the gods, or the pleasures of love. The true spirit of philosophy is so far from being in opposition to taste, that it is, on the contrary, its most solid support, as it teaches us always to set out from true and evident principles, to observe that every art has its peculiar nature, every situation and affection of the mind its proper character, and every object its distinctive colouring, and thus prevents our confounding the limits by which the various kinds are so carefully distinguished. Such is the nature, excellence, and power of the philosophical spirit, the abuse of which shews that it is not truly possessed.

It has been remarked by some, that the submitting the objects of taste to analytical discussion is adapted to blunt the delicacy of the feeling powers, and to damp the fire and vigour of genius. But this effect is not to be feared. The true philosopher knows that in the moment when genius creates and invents, it will not admit of the least check or restraint; that it loves to rush forward without controul and without rule, to produce indiscriminately the monstrous and the sublime, and to carry down its rapid stream gold and mud mingled together, by the impetuosity of its course. Reason, therefore, gives way to genius, while it creates a boundless liberty, and even permits it to continue its career, until it exhausts its vigour, and sinks down to repose, like those fiery coursers, which it is impossible to tame any other way than by throwing the bridle upon

upon their necks. But then it is the time for reaſon to exerciſe its authority, and to ſit in judgment upon the productions of genius. Accordingly, it preſerves whatever was the offspring of a true and noble enthuſiaſm, effaces, on the contrary, whatever was produced by the irregular ſallies of an over-heated imagination, and thus enriches the republic of letters with maſterly performances in all the various kinds. Where is the writer of genius and taſte, who does not perceive, in the heat of compoſition, that one part of his mind (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) ſeparates itſelf from the other which is employed in compoſing, in order to obſerve its motions, and to give them a free courſe, and alſo points out beforehand what is afterwards to be effaced?

The true philoſopher uſes much the ſame method in judging of the productions of others, that he employs in compoſing his own. He begins by giving himſelf up to the high and lively ſenſations of pleaſure, which generally ariſe from the firſt impreſſion that a new and maſterly performance makes upon the mind. Perſuaded, however, that real beauties gain in proportion as they are attentively examined, he recollects himſelf; extends his reſearches to the cauſes of his ſatisfaction; ſingles them out one after another; diſtinguiſhes carefully between illuſory ſenſations and deep and laſting impreſſions; and by this analytical procedure is rendered capable of pronouncing with judgment concerning the merit of a work in general, and of each of its particular and conſtituent parts.

From theſe obſervations we ſhall be furniſhed with an anſwer to a queſtion, which has been often propoſed, and alſo much debated, viz. Whether, in judging concerning a work of taſte, ſentiment or feeling is to be preferred before reaſoning and diſcuſſion? Feeling is undoubtedly the natural judge for the firſt moment, Diſcuſſion for the ſecond; and the ſecond judge will, almoſt always, confirm the deciſions of the firſt in thoſe perſons, who, with a quick and delicate ſenſe of beauty, are ſo happy as to poſſeſs a juſt and accurate diſcernment. But the difficulty, it will be alledged, ſtill remains; for as ſentiment and diſcuſſion will not always agree, what muſt be done when they differ? Is it not beſt, in all caſes, to follow ſentiment as our guide, and hold always by its deciſion? Is it not a miſerable occupation, ſome will ſay, to be diſputing againſt our agreeable ſenſations? and what obligations ſhall we lie under to philoſophy, if it manifeſtly tend to diminiſh our pleaſures? We cannot anſwer this latter queſtion without the utmoſt regret; becauſe we are obliged to acknowledge the effect of philoſophy to be, in reality, what it is here repreſented to be.

Such is the unhappy lot of humanity, that the knowledge we acquire, ſerves only to give us a mortifying view of the ſcenes of error and illuſion through which we have paſſed, and is, almoſt always, attended with the diminution of our pleaſures. The rude ſimplicity of our anceſtors rendered the impreſſions they received from the monſtrous productions of the antient theatre,

theatre, more lively and ſtriking than thoſe which we receive, in this poliſhed age, from the moſt perfect of our dramatic performances. The nations, which we ſurpaſs in knowledge and in refinement, are not leſs happy than we are; ſince both their deſires and their wants are leſs numerous than ours, and they are ſatisfied with pleaſures of a leſs elegant kind, than thoſe which we purſue. We ſhould not, however, be willing to exchange our knowledge for the ignorance of thoſe nations, or for the rude ſimplicity of our anceſtors. For, though this knowledge may diminiſh our pleaſures, yet it flatters our vanity. We applaud ourſelves on account of that delicacy and refinement, that render us difficult to be pleaſed, and even look upon them as meritorious. Self-love is the reigning paſſion, and that which, generally ſpeaking, we are the moſt eager to gratify. The pleaſure we derive from thence, is not, like many others, the effect of a ſudden and violent impreſſion; it is uniform and permanent, and may, therefore, be enjoyed at leiſure.

Theſe reflections, methinks, will be eſteemed ſufficient to juſtify philoſophy from the accuſations that have been brought againſt it by ignorance and envy. We cannot, however, conclude without obſerving, than even upon the ſuppoſition that theſe accuſations and reproaches were juſt, yet they loſe their influence, and become unſeemly, when they are not made by philoſophers themſelves. To them alone it belongs to determine the ſphere, and to fix the boundaries of the philoſophical ſpirit; as it belongs only to thoſe who have wit, to plead againſt the abuſe that may be

made of it. But it unluckily happens, in oppoſition to this rule, that thoſe, who have the leaſt acquaintance with philoſophy, are its moſt violent detractors; juſt as poetry is decried by ſuch as have no talent for that noble art, the profound ſciences, by ſuch as are ignorant of their firſt principles, and the age we live in, by thoſe writers, whoſe productions are the moſt adapted to expoſe it to contempt.

MEMOIRS

MEMOIRS OF CHRISTINA, QUEEN OF SWEDEN.

THE knowledge of hiſtory, when it is not enlightened by philoſophy, is but a trifling attainment. The ſtudy of it would have been more intereſting, if more time had been ſpent upon the hiſtory of men, and leſs upon that of princes, which, for the moſt part, is little elſe than a regiſter of vice and folly; and the matter is made worſe, when a multitude of facts are added unworthy of being remembered. A man of genius, unacquainted with hiſtory, conſoles himſelf in his ignorance, by reflecting, that what paſſes before his eyes will one day become hiſtory.

It were to be wiſhed, that every hundred years a collection was made of hiſtorical facts that are worth preſerving, and the reſuſe burnt. —This would be a means of relieving our poſterity from that inundation with which it is threatened, if we go on abuſing the preſs under the notion of informing future ages of things we don't think it worth while to enquire after even when they happen. I ſuppoſe, for this reaſonable wiſh, I ſhall have the reproaches and anathemas of the compilers; but I appeal from theſe anathemas to the wiſe; they alone ought to deſcribe men as well as govern them: if they did, hiſtory and men would fare the better for it.

I could not help making theſe reflections at ſeeing two huge volumes, which have been juſt publiſhed in Holland, of Memoirs of Chriſtina, queen of Sweden.

If the author of these Memoirs had any design of making the world acquainted with his heroine, I doubt he has miscarried; I know many learned men, who are habituated to painful study, and yet could not endure this work, or go through, with any patience, that farrago of erudition and citation, in which the History of Christina is involved. 'Tis a portrait ill-designed, torn to pieces, and dispersed under a heap of rubbish.

However, the desire I have always had of forming some idea of this extraordinary princess, about whom the world is so much divided, induced me to run over this enormous compilation; I have surveyed it as one does those perspectives, in which the painter has drawn a human figure in a deformed manner, and which is not to be distinguished but in a certain point of view; where it appears in its just proportion, disengaged from those adventitious objects that disguise it. I have endeavoured to catch this point of view, but I do not flatter myself with having found it. Be that as it will, here is the result of what I could learn. If my performance is thought tiresome, the reader must have recourse to the original for better entertainment. I shall endeavour, at least, to render this piece useful, by the principles I shall intersperse, and the reflections which I shall have occasion to make upon those two scourges of the human race, tyranny and superstition.

My first design was to have given, from these Memoirs, a short history of Christina; but the uniform pace and unvaried style, to which they have thought proper to subject history, would have been a perpetual

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clog upon me. I know not for what reaſon it has been ſo generally agreed to reduce hiſtory to a kind of regular gazette. They pretend, that an hiſtorian ought not to take the liberty of making reflections, but leave them to be made by the reader. For my own part, I think the beſt way of ſuggeſting reflections to the reader, is to make them. The whole ſecret lies in good management, in preſenting them dexterouſly, and connecting them with the ſubject, ſo as to make it more intereſting, and not tedious.

In a word, reflections ſeem to be as neceſſary to make hiſtory agreeable, even to fix facts in the memory, as geometrical demonſtrations are to impreſs upon the mind the truth of propoſitions. Hiſtorians, ſome ſay, ſhould only give their depoſitions as witneſſes; reflections expoſe them to the ſuſpicion of partiality. But, in my opinion, the manner of relating facts may render an hiſtorian as juſtly ſuſpected of being partial, as any reflections he can make; and if he is liable to partiality either way, ſure we ſhould prefer that which is the moſt agreeable. Beſides, the ſuſpicion of partiality properly belongs only to authors who write the hiſtory of their own times. Is it probable that I ſhould either make a ſatyr or a panegyric upon Chriſtina? I may be charged with being miſtaken, and this might be the caſe, if I gave no more than a ſimple recital, but I can never be accuſed of being biaſſed either to one ſide or the other.

However, not to contend with a prejudice ſo generally received, I am not going to give the reader the hiſtory of Chriſtina, but only ſome obſervations upon

her life. I have no objection to their being called an extract from Chriſtina's memoirs—a letter upon the ſubject—a converſation with my reader, or any other title he thinks proper.

I ſhall take no notice of the letters which Chriſtina wrote to her father when ſhe was five years old, to inform him that ſhe was learning to ſay her prayers; letters which the compiler acknowledges to be little intereſting to ſtrangers, though, he thinks, they may be of great ſervice to the Swedes.

I paſs by the calculation of her nativity, and her father's Guſtavus Adolphus, to conſider a few moments that celebrated conqueror.

While he was avenging the proteſtants of the empire againſt the oppreſſion of Ferdinand, in alliance with France, and ſecretly countenanced by the court of Rome, on account of its jealouſy of the Auſtrian power, all Bavaria reſounded with declamations, exorciſms, litanies and imprecations againſt this prince: the German monks ſaid he was antichriſt, the Lutheran miniſters ſaid he was not antichriſt; our author, however, aſſures us, that this prince uſed his victories with great moderation. It is pretended, that Germany was indebted, for the ſentiments Guſtavus entertained about the Catholics, to his ſtudying in his youth at Pavia, under the celebrated Galileo, whom the inquiſition treated as a heretic, becauſe he was an aſtronomer. But (to ſay nothing of its being doubtful whether Guſtavus ever was in Italy) a place where the Ptolemaic ſyſtem was an article of faith, does not ſeem likely to inſpire a Lutheran prince with ſuch favourable ſentiments.

ſentiments. Be this as it will, pope Urban VIII. who, to all the zeal of a ſovereign pontiff for his religion, joined an averſion ſtill more violent to the emperor Ferdinand, aſſures us, that the Spaniards of Charles V. did more harm to the Romiſh church than the Swedes of Guſtavus did in Germany. It is to be wiſhed, for the honour of humanity and of Guſtavus, that he deſerved the encomiums given to his moderation. If any thing can render them ſuſpected, it is that pretended taſte for letters aſcribed to him, for no other reaſon, but becauſe he had read books on tactics and the military art. It might as well be maintained, that the late king of Pruſſia was a lover of the ſciences, becauſe his violent paſſion for his troops induced him to give protection to the ſurgeons of the army.

The compiler has ſuch a ſtrange veneration for ſovereigns, that he allows the merit of countenancing letters even to Charles XII. who never read any thing in his life but Cæſar's Commentaries. Thus, in our prodigality of praiſes to princes, we never conſider whether they deſerve them; but poſterity, the impartial judge of writers and of kings, will aſſign their proper ranks to thoſe who commend, and thoſe who are commended.

Nothing ſtrikes me more in the hiſtory of Guſtavus, than the wiſe reflections aſcribed to him upon conquerors. One might have believed them of Socrates, and Guſtavus ſhould have added, to the merit of being the author of them, the glory of putting them in practice.

The miſchief he did to the houſe of Auſtria did not render Sweden more happy. I don't know but Peter the Great, whoſe conqueſts always redounded to the advantage of his people, was the beſt qualified to determine this moral queſtion, whether a prince has a right to aggrandize his ſubjects at the expence of his neighbours? To eſtabliſh the tranquillity of the empire, and to humble the houſe of Auſtria, it was not neceſſary that Guſtavus, in one year, ſhould invade two-thirds of Germany, and create jealouſy in his allies, becauſe Louis XIII. refuſed an interview with him, the honour of which would have belonged entirely to the king of Sweden.

Guſtavus urged very juſtly, that merit conſtituted the only diſtinguiſhing virtue of kings; but the principal merit of a ſovereign is his love of humanity, juſtice and the laws. Kings who have only power, or perhaps valour, though the firſt among courtiers, are the laſt among wiſe men.

1632. This prince being killed at the battle of Lutzen in a manner ſo difficult to be accounted for, Chriſtina, yet an infant, ſucceeded him. In the plan which the celebrated chancellor Oxenſtiern laid down for the regency, we can't help diſcovering an enmity to deſpotiſm, which ought to conſecrate the memory of that great ſtateſman.

He ſeems inclined to a mixt government, between a monarchy and a republic; and we do not deny that this form enjoys many advantages, without entering into that delicate queſtion about the beſt government that can be inſtituted; the ſolution of which

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muſt receive different modifications from the difference of climates, ſituation and circumſtances, as well as genius of kings and people.

We can never ſuſpect ſo intelligent a man as Oxenſtiern, as ſome have done, of giving the preference to an Ariſtocratical government, which natural right and experience demonſtrate to be the worſt of all.

Thoſe who were charged with the education of Chriſtina, were ordered early to inculcate upon her not to put abſolute confidence in any one perſon; an excellent maxim undoubtedly in itſelf, but which has been abuſed by ſo many princes, to diſtruſt both vice and virtue, never to take counſel, and to think themſelves prudent and firm, when they are only obſtinate.

Chriſtina early diſcovered an uncommon penetration and capacity. We are told that, in her infancy, ſhe could read Thucidides and Polybius in the original, and that ſhe formed a juſt judgment concerning thoſe writers. It would have been much better to have made her acquainted with men than Greek authors. True philoſophy is more neceſſary to a prince than hiſtory; I except that of the Bible, to which the ſtates of Sweden would have had her devote moſt of her time, being (as they ſaid in a memorial drawn upon this occaſion) the ſource of all others. We cannot but commend the ſtates for taking care that the young queen ſhould be taught the principles of religion; but it ſeems that other qualifications were too much forgotten. The ſequel ſhews they ſhould not have been neglected.

I ſhall not enter into any particulars relating to the minority of Chriſtina, nor of her conduct with France

when she took the reins of government into her own hands, nor into the reciprocal complaints, perhaps equally just, of Christina and her allies; to explain these political contests is undoubtedly an arduous task, but the uncertainty of facts, which we are even witnesses of, should make the pretended developement of these secret and past intrigues very suspicious; they would probably have been represented in a very different light by the principal actors in them. On these subjects then I shall observe a profound silence. 'Tis the private history of Christina, and not the history of her kingdom, that I am employed about: I shall not consider her a moment upon the throne of Sweden, but for the sake of viewing her more distinctly, and at my leisure, in her retirement.

One of the things, which ought to be remembered to the honour of Christina, was the respect she expressed for the famous Grotius. This man, illustrious for his works, but more so for the honour of being the friend of Barneveldt, and the defender of the liberties of his country, went to France to seek an asylum against the persecution of the Gomarists. He offended cardinal Richlieu by not flattering his literary talents; for it generally happens that great men, by some foible or other, sink themselves to the common level. The protector of *Myronne*, and of *l'Amour tyrannique*, who both persecuted and rewarded Corneille at the same time, not only neglected doing any thing for Grotius, but obliged him to retire in disgust. Gustavus Adolphus received him; Oxenstiern sent him to France with the title of ambassador, and Christina soon after confirmed

confirmed this title. Thus she recompensed, in a manner worthy of herself, a man of the most distinguished merit, mortified the Hollanders, whom she could not endure, and piqued the cardinal, of whom she thought she had reason to complain.

Grotius was excused, by his rank, from practising that suppleness, to which his genius and temper were by no means adapted; and he had the pleasure of treating, upon an equality, a minister who had despised him. It is for the honour of Christina that she entertained the same sentiments concerning Grotius with posterity; not that this concurrence of testimonies was necessary to the reputation of so great a man: But princes ought to be reminded to be just, and, like the public, to distinguish great and virtuous men. If Christina shewed her respect out of vanity; even such a passion is not to be despised; for if it be a weakness in kings as well as other persons, it is a weakness capable of producing great effects.

1646. After the victory of Norlingen, by which the prince of Conde, and Turenne, at the head of the troops of France, avenged the honour of the Swedes, who had been repulsed there some years before, Christina wrote a letter of thanks to the prince of Conde. Some historians assert, that this prince, in his answer, acknowledged a great part of his success to be due to the viscount Turenne. If this fact is true, the prince of Conde added to his glory by this acknowledgment: but no traces of it are to be found in his answer.

It

It is no matter of ſurprize that Chriſtina, as paſſionately fond of letters and repoſe as her father was of war, ſhould haſten the concluſion of the peace of Weſtphalia. The animoſity and jealouſy of the miniſters occaſioned greater difficulties than the prodigious number of intereſts, which were to be adjuſted. The plenipotentiaries of Sweden (divided as much among themſelves as thoſe of France) were the count Oxenſtiern, ſon of the great Chancellor, and Alder Salvius, chancellor of the court. The firſt acted agreeable to the inſtructions of his father, who diſpleaſed Chriſtina, becauſe ſhe could not do without him, and becauſe he wanted to protract the concluſion of the peace, in oppoſition to the queen's inclinations. He thought the continuation of the war would redound to the honour of Sweden, reduce the power of France, whom he looked upon as a dangerous friend, and benefit all the Proteſtants of Germany. It was he who wrote to his ſon, confuſed with the chaos of buſineſs, "Don't you know, my ſon, what a little matter is "the ſecret of governing the world?"

Salvius, the collegue of Oxenſtiern, and of a more obliging turn, enjoyed all the queen's favour and confidence; nor was he deſtitute of merit. Chriſtina, like other princes, loved rather to be flattered than ſerved; but at the ſame time, ſhe was too ſenſible to ſacrifice her diſcernment and her true intereſt to vanity and ſelf-love. Upon making Salvius ſenator of Sweden, though he was not of noble family, ſhe addreſſed herſelf to the ſenate in theſe words: "If "an affair of conſequence and counſel be propoſed,

"we

" we don't ask who were your ancestors——but " what is proper to be done. Salvius would have " been qualified in all respects, had he been born of " a great family. If young persons of rank have " abilities, they shall make their fortunes, like others, " I will not throw obstacles in their way."

This long wished for peace of Westphalia was at last accomplished, to the mutual satisfaction of most of the powers concerned, but to the great discontent of Innocent X. This pope wanted to carry two points in the peace, which were incompatible in themselves, the humbling the house of Austria, which he desired as a temporal prince, and the reduction of the Protestants, which he wished for as a sovereign pontiff. He published a bull, in which he refused Christina the title of queen of Sweden, to punish her for being too much influenced in the accomplishment of the peace. Such a step would have been politic in the twelfth century, when princes thought their titles stood in need of briefs and benedictions: it came five hundred years too late. The nuncio posted up the bull of his master at Vienna; the emperor ordered it to be pulled down; Innocent held his tongue; and there was an end of the matter.

The love of liberty made Christina refuse all the offers of marriage that were made her, though some of them were very advantageous, and the Swedes pressed her much to marry. Philip IV, king of Spain, was one of her suitors; but he soon dropped the affair, being afraid, by this alliance, he should no longer be able to treat the protestants as heretics.

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Of thoſe that made pretenſions, he who ſeemed the moſt urgent, was Charles Guſtavus, Chriſtina's couſin, and prince Palatine, for whom ſhe had been deſigned from her being a child; but ſhe was as deaf to him as to his rivals; and yet, whether he was leſs diſagreeable to her than the reſt, or that ſhe then had taken the reſolution of abdicating her throne, ſhe prevailed with the ſtates to have him declared her ſucceſſor. By this ſtep ſhe kept herſelf at liberty, ſecured the tranquillity of Sweden, and prevented the ambition of ſome great families, who might, after her death, have made pretenſions to the crown. Charles Guſtavus had a revenue aſſigned him to keep up a court; but the queen ſaid it was the policy of the royal family to give no territory to a prince who was in the ſucceſſion; a maxim of no great importance, and which deſpotic princes, the moſt ſhort-ſighted of them, have always followed. Chriſtina, for the ſame reaſon, always kept prince Charles in the dark about the affairs of the government during her reign. Though ſhe was not fond of governing, yet her independent ſpirit would bear no conſtraint while ſhe did govern.

It was about this time that the troubles in France began—the war of the Fronde, more famous for the ridiculous circumſtances that attended it, than the evils that followed—the baniſhment of Mazarine—his return—his ſecond baniſhment—the impriſonment of the princes—the turbulent aſſemblies of parliament, which at one time ſeditious, and at another pacific,

publiſhed

publiſhed arrets while they fought battles, and iſſued out warrants for whole armies.

The love Chriſtina had for tranquillity, her fears that this civil war would occaſion new troubles in Europe, and perhaps the regard ſhe always had for the prince of Conde, induced her to take part in theſe commotions. She wrote to queen Anne of Auſtria, to the duke of Orleans, to the prince, and even to the parliament. Her letters had no other effect, than to draw upon her Reſident complaints and reprimands from the court of France, though he had only followed his orders. Theſe troubles, which were begun without her, were ſoon after put an end to without her mediation. The parliament, which had been upon the point of treating with this princeſs, were baniſhed to Pontoiſe; and ſo happy with being recalled, that they complimented, a few years after, that very cardinal, upon whoſe head they had ſet a price. The prince of Conde, a fugitive in Spain, loſt every thing but his reputation; and Mazarine, till his death, remained maſter of the queen, the king, and the kingdom.

The regard which Chriſtina had, or affected, for eminent men, made her wiſh to have near her the celebrated Deſcartes, the reſtorer of philoſophy, who was unknown in his own country, becauſe he had cultivated the ſciences more than his fortune; proſcribed at Rome, becauſe in the queſtion about the motion of the earth, he had paid more regard to aſtronomical obſervations than to the pope's bulls, and perſecuted in Holland, for having ſubſtituted the true method of philo-

philoſophiſing to the jargon of the ſchools. Chriſtina, charmed with the writings of this great man, propoſed to him ſome of thoſe queſtions in morals, which philoſophers have agitated ſo long, without deciding, or making men at all the better or happier. Such, among others, was that of the ſovereign good, which, Deſcartes ſaid, conſiſted in the right management of the will; becauſe, ſays he, the happineſs ariſing from fortune, health and knowledge do not depend upon ourſelves — as if the government of the will was not equally under the controul of the Supreme Being, as the other ſources of happineſs. This ſolution, unſatisfactory as it was, pleaſed Chriſtina ſo much, that ſhe ardently wiſhed to ſee the author, as a man whom ſhe thought muſt be happy, and whoſe condition ſhe envied. Mr. Chanut, the French ambaſſador in Sweden, and a friend of the philoſopher, was charged with this negotiation, in which he found great difficulty to ſucceed. The difference of climate was one of the principal reaſons that deterred Deſcartes from this voyage. He told his friend, that a man, born in the gardens of Touraine, and retired to a country where, indeed, he has leſs honey, but more milk, perhaps, than in the land promiſed to the Iſraelites, could not eaſily prevail upon himſelf to leave it for the ſake of living in a country of bears, among rocks and ice. This was a ſufficient reaſon for a philoſopher, who could not be too careful of his health, becauſe it is one of thoſe bleſſings that does not depend upon other men. But may not we make ſome doubt whether Deſcartes, who loved to live in

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ſolitude, to purſue his ſtudies at leiſure, was not a little afraid of coming too near a throne.

A prince in vain attempts to be a philoſopher, or to affect it. Royalty forms a certain character, that cannot be laid aſide, ſtrikes awe into thoſe who approach it, and is troubleſome to the philoſopher, in ſpite of all the pains the monarch may take to inſpire him with confidence. The wiſe man reverences princes; ſometimes eſteems them, but always avoids them *. "We are a theatre great enough for "one another," ſaid Deſcartes to another philoſopher, whom he had invited to take part of his retreat, at the time Chriſtina wanted to draw him out of it.

However as the love of liberty cannot ſtand out againſt the importunity of kings, Deſcartes ſoon after repaired to Stockholm, with a full reſolution, as he ſaid, not to conceal his ſentiments from the queen, and his intention of returning to a philoſophical retirement.

We ſee by his letter that he was well ſatisfied with the reception the queen gave him. He was excuſed from the drudgery of courtiers; but it was in order to impoſe upon him other hardſhips, which totally diſconcerted his manner of living, and which, in conjunction with the ſeverities of the climate, brought him to his grave in about four months.

* If there are any exceptions to this rule, happy is the ſovereign in whoſe favour they are made! Socrates, accuſed by Anytus before the Areopagus, would have fled to the protection of Marcus Aurelius, had he lived at that time.

Deſcartes

Descartes found in Christina a great deal of wit and sagacity; but it is evident, the unfortunate princess Palatine was that philosopher's favourite pupil. Whether the troubles he had experienced himself increased his attachment, or whether he found her of a more comprehensive genius, or of a more tractable disposition, which is the greatest recommendation to the head of a sect, he could not conceal his partiality to her, and by that means alarmed the jealousy of Christina.

While he renounced every other advantage, he retained the ambition of philosophy to see his opinion and his taste exclusively adopted; and, therefore, he did not approve of the queen's dividing her time betwixt philosophy and the study of the languages. He found himself in a disagreeable situation, among such a crowd of scholars as surrounded the queen; such a literary levee gave occasion to foreigners to say, that Sweden would soon be governed by grammarians. He had the courage to make such free and spirited remonstrances to the queen upon this head, as produced an irreconcileable difference betwixt him and the learned Isaac Vossius, that incredulous and superstitious theologian, of whom Charles II. king of England, used to say, that he believed every thing but the Bible. Descartes's representations did not prevent the queen from learning Greek: however they did not alter her sentiments concerning him.

The moments she devoted to him, were stole from her sleep. She intended to have made him director of an academy, which she thought of establishing. In short,

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ſhe diſtinguiſhed him by ſo many marks of favour, that it was pretended the grammarians of Stockholm haſtened the philoſopher's death by poiſon. But this manner of being avenged of an enemy, ſays Sorbiere, is an honour which men of letters leave to the great.

Whatever paſſionate fondneſs Chriſtina might ſhew for the philoſophy of Deſcartes, there is no reaſon to imagine, as ſome have done, that ſhe conſulted him in political affairs. Placed, as ſhe was, in the moſt advantageous ſchool in the world for this kind of knowledge, the ſenate of Sweden, what aſſiſtance could ſhe receive from a philoſopher, who, by his conduct in Holland, ſhewed that he was unfit to deal with mankind, and who had been hindred, by a thirty years retreat, from knowing them? It has been pretended, that ſhe had much more regard for Deſcartes himſelf, than ſhe had for his opinions; and that ſhe reaped no other benefit from the ſtudy of philoſophy than this, to learn that the modern fools are no better than the antients.

1651. The troubles which ſoon after aroſe in her kingdom, furniſhed her with much more important ſubjects than the ſtudy of Greek, innate ideas, and vortexes. The reſolution ſhe had taken never to marry, alarmed the people, who were afraid they ſhould be deſtitute of a maſter. The diſorder of the finances, exhauſted by her profuſeneſs, occaſioned an univerſal diſcontent. This firſt ſuggeſted to her the deſign of quitting the throne. She ſurrendered herſelf in full ſenate; declared her intention, and ſignified it by letter to prince

prince Charles Guſtavus. He, verſed in diſſimulation, and fearing leſt the queen had laid a ſnare for him, rejected her propoſal, and prayed that God and Sweden might preſerve her long, and, with much parade, pretended to ſentiments he was little aquainted with.

The ſolitude in which he affected to live, after having accepted the ſucceſſion, his precaution to keep at a diſtance from court, and the exceſſive circumſpection he obſerved in all his words and actions, diſcovered plainly his wiſhes to aſcend the throne. He flattered himſelf perhaps that the ſenate would accept her reſignation, and appoint him to the government, in recompence for his modeſty: but he was miſtaken in his expectations. Whether Chriſtina had a mind to appeaſe her diſcontented ſubjects, and eſtabliſh herſelf the more firmly on the throne by their ſuffrage, or ſhe ſaw that her abdication was not ſo favourably received among foreigners as ſhe expected; in ſhort, whether having renounced the crown out of vanity, ſhe had a mind to reſume it again out of caprice, ſhe ſubmitted, or pretended to ſubmit to the importunity of her ſucceſſor, and her ſubjects.

1652. The year following Chriſtina wrote to Mr. Godeau, biſhop of Vence, who publiſhed a great many verſes, with very little poetry. This prelate had beſtowed many compliments upon her, which ſhe anſwered to this effect; "That the gentlemen of "France were ſo *uſed to pay compliments*, that ſhe "durſt not complain of a general cuſtom; and that "ſhe was obliged to him." The ſame perſon had diſcovered ſome ſigns of an ambition to make a con-

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vert of her. The queen, after thanking him for his kind intentions, wiſhed ſhe had the honour to be of his opinion, and expreſſed her ſurprize that ſo ſenſible a man ſhould not be a Lutheran. She ſhewed ſo little her intentions of turning Catholic, that ſhe wrote a letter about the ſame time to prince Frederic of Heſſe, to diſſuade him from embracing the Romiſh religion. Two ſuch letters as theſe from a princeſs who became a Catholic a year after, would furniſh matter of aſtoniſhment, if experience had not taught us, how little time is neceſſary to change the ſentiments and taſte of mankind in general, and eſpecially of princes. A proteſtant author, who has mentioned theſe letters, remarks, with more malignity than wit, that the hour of grace was not yet come: we may ſay, with more reaſon, that perhaps Chriſtina had not been yet ſufficiently tormented by the miniſters, to give her an averſion to their doctrines. Such is the ſtrange injuſtice which mankind are guilty of, that there is but one ſtep betwixt the hatred of divines and the hatred of the worſhip they recommend. If we begin to diſengage ourſelves from them, that which appeared reſpectable, becomes indifferent; if they abuſe their power, that which was indifferent, is indifferent no longer. This kind of reaſoning is, doubtleſs, neither ſolid nor equitable; but it is the logic of the paſſions. We muſt manage them as we do a ſick man: and the ſureſt way of teaching mankind to be juſt, is to begin, by acting juſtly towards them.

Beſides, if we examine the arguments themſelves which Chriſtina made uſe of to engage the prince of Heſſe

Heſſe to continue in his religion; it is eaſy to diſcern at bottom a real indifference for her own. Though a Lutheran, and conſequently as far remote from Calviniſm as the church of Rome*, ſhe nevertheleſs adviſes this Calviniſt prince not to change his principles. She ſeems to have a juſt abhorrence of that ſtupid rage with which perſons, who call themſelves wiſe, have written about things *which are only to be believed*. "I leave it, ſays ſhe, to thoſe whoſe profeſſion it "is to meddle in controverſies, to ſurfeit with "them at their pleaſure." She repreſents to the prince nothing but motives of honour, conſtancy, and the advantage of his family and ſtate; motives by no means ſufficient to ballance the intereſt of true religion, but very well adapted to vanity and human weakneſs.

The liberality of Chriſtina, bounties laviſhed with little prudence or limitation, ſoon became the ſubject of panegyrics to the learned men of Sweden and other countries. Her hiſtorian has reckoned two hundred, which at this time are utterly forgotten; a fate common to moſt panegyrics made in the life-time of their heroes. That of Trajan, by Pliny the younger, pronounced before the emperor in full ſenate, is almoſt the only one which is now extant; and of this we may ſay, that even the name of the orator,

* The Lutherans and Calviniſts have frequently expreſſed an implacable antipathy to each other; yet they are more nearly allied to each other than to Papiſts, having the ſame common objections to moſt of the fundamental doctrines of popery.

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and the idea which his work gives us of the eloquence of thoſe times, have not contributed ſo much to preſerve it as the virtues of the prince who was the ſubject of it. It is not the work which immortalizes the monarch; it is the monarch who gives the work a paſſport to poſterity. Perhaps this very panegyric would have done an injury to Trajan, if, by deſerving it, he had not made us forget his weakneſs in hearing it pronounced.

I paſs over all the marks of reſpect which Chriſtina ſhewed to Saumaiſe (that very learned and very diſagreeable man, who, amongſt the many things in which he was engaged, undertook to interpret dreams)—the viſit which Chriſtina made him—their lecture together—the boxing match betwixt meſſieurs Bourdelot and Meiboom, and other anecdotes of equal importance. I omit likewiſe the names of all the learned men whom this princeſs invited into her kingdom, or found in it, as well as their epiſtolary correſpondence with her. Inſtead of writing ſo many letters of compliment to the learned, ſhe had better have ſent a few more letters of exchange to Nicholas Heinſius, whom ſhe commiſſioned to purchaſe books, manuſcripts, and medals; and who could never be reimburſed the money he had advanced. However, the hiſtorian undertakes to vindicate her conduct, even upon this article, and makes it almoſt amount to a crime in Heinſius to complain. This want of fidelity and fair-dealing is common enough among monarchs with one another, but they might be excuſed acting ſo to private perſons.

1653. What is moſt remarkable in the letters in queſtion, is the offer which, according to a modern author, Chriſtina made to Scudery, of accepting the dedication of Alaric, and making him a conſiderable preſent, on condition he would ſtrike out of the poem the eulogium of Mr. de la Gardie, who was in diſgrace with her majeſty. Scudery made anſwer to this propoſal, that he would never deſtroy the altar on which he had ſacrificed. After ſuch an anſwer, one cannot help ſaying, what a pity it is the poem of Alaric had not been better!

Among the many learned men whom ſhe patronized, of different countries, we don't find one Engliſhman.

That nation, which has ſince been ſo fruitful of great geniuſes, was then agitated by internal troubles and civil wars, very unfriendly to letters. They went ſo far at laſt, as to cut off the head of their ſovereign Charles I. and were attentive to nothing but their grandeur, liberty, and commerce. The execution of this prince, at firſt, made a great noiſe in Sweden. Some did not think of it with much horror; Mr. Chanut, ambaſſador of France, ſaid, that depriving the king of England of his ſovereignty, for violating his contract with his ſubjects, was an example to all princes; but the exceſs of fury and injuſtice to which the nation was carried, was univerſally condemned. It is ſcarce probable Chriſtina, upon hearing this news, ſhould have held the converſation which has been aſcribed to her; "The Engliſh have cut off the head of their king

"for

" for making no uſe of it; and they have acted very " wiſely." Who can reconcile this diſcourſe with the letter ſhe wrote, at the ſame time, to the ſon of that unfortunate monarch, in which ſhe exclaims againſt the ſentence of that ſanguinary parliament? The horror Chriſtina had conceived of it, was one of the principal cauſes of delay to the concluſion of the treaty which Cromwell's ambaſſador was then negotiating with her. The ambaſſador, who could not execute his commiſſion but at the expence of a great deal of pains and time, complained, that at the audiences ſhe gave him, ſhe talked of nothing but philoſophy, diverſions, and ballads.

Of all the foreign miniſters at the court of Sweden, Pimentel, the Spaniſh ambaſſador, was the queen's great favourite. At the firſt audience he had with Chriſtina, he retired without ſaying a word; and he declared to her the next day, that he had been ſtruck dumb by the majeſty of her perſon: one may judge whether this pleaſed her or not. Pimentel, an able miniſter, availed himſelf of this firſt advantage, to gain the confidence of the queen. He ſoon diſcovered in her a violent paſſion for novelty, a prejudice for the laſt comers, and a readineſs to betray her ſecrets where ſhe had beſtowed her liking. But her partiality to Pimentel, however uſeful to Spain, gave both France and Sweden ſo much umbrage, that ſhe was ſoon obliged to diſmiſs him.

1654. We are now come to the period at which ſhe abdicated the crown. The deſign ſhe had entertained ſome years now broke out with ſo much vio-

lence, that it was impoſſible to diſſuade her from it. It ſeems as if a diſguſt at buſineſs, and a deſire of being free, were the principal motives that influenced her to that determination. "I am perpetually hear-"ing the ſame thing, (ſaid ſhe, ſpeaking about buſi-"neſs.) I ſee I muſt reſtore myſelf to ſtudy, and the "converſation of the learned." She imagined (to uſe one of her own expreſſions) ſhe ſaw the devil when her ſecretaries came with diſpatches for her to ſign; and the fatigue of government threw her into ſuch a deep melancholy, that it was apprehended her mind would be quite broken with it. She communicated to Mr. Chanut the reſolution ſhe had taken. The talk, occaſioned by her conduct in this reſpect, diſturbed her but little. "I am not ſolicitous, ſaid ſhe, about "the *plaudite*. It is almoſt impoſſible that a reſolute "and vigorous deſign ſhould pleaſe all the world. "I can content myſelf with a ſingle approver; and "I dare engage I ſhall have one. I ſhall always "have the pleaſure of recollecting, that I have done "good to mankind." Why then was ſhe deſirous to give over doing ſo?

The abdication of Chriſtina occaſioned great variety of opinions. It would have been more generally approved (without deſerving to be ſo) if her converſion, which happened ſoon after, had not incenſed all the enemies of the catholic church againſt her. In general, we are diſpoſed to applaud perſons who deſcend from a throne. We have ſo diminutive an idea of the immenſe duties of a prince, that we look upon their abdication as a ſplendid kind of ſacrifice. We

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ſhould not be ſo raſh and precipitate in forming our judgment, if we were to enquire into the obligation which the name of monarch impoſes. Rigorouſly devoted to juſtice, and to decorum, and bound to be the firſt in obſerving the laws, of which they are the guardians, they are accountable to the ſtate for all the evil that happens by their means, and all the good that does not happen. How few kings are there who would be kings on ſuch conditions. A ſovereign, however, that does poſſeſs proper talents for government, is guilty of a crime in rendering thoſe talents uſeleſs, by a voluntary deſertion of his ſtation. He is excuſeable only by ſubſtituting a ſucceſſor capable of ſupplying his place. Beſides that ſuch ſucceſſors are very rare, there are different motives that determine the conduct of ſome princes in this reſpect, they are only fond, perhaps, of glory, and they have no regard for the happineſs of mankind. Princes, indeed, who quit their throne for want of ability to govern, acquit themſelves of a very eſſential duty. They deſerve praiſe, if this was done from an idea of the propriety of it, and their conſciouſneſs of incapacity for government. But moſt of them want a laudable motive to give even the appearance of juſtice to ſuch a ſtep. A love of indolence, the deſire of indulging at leiſure ſome trifling, contemptible paſſion, are generally the reaſons of their abdication.

One of the great benefits that princes might have in deſcending from their throne, would be to aſſure themſelves, by this means, of the reality of thoſe encomiums which had been laviſhed upon them while

they were in power — to see the herd of flatterers vanish, and to find themselves alone in the company of virtue, if happily virtue be of their acquaintance. But it is not often that these benefits have any charms for princes. The example of kings, who voluntarily get rid of their courtiers, is not very contagious.

It is said Christina, before she abdicated her crown, wanted Charles Gustavus to have entered into a treaty with her, that would have been very dishonourable to him. She wanted to reserve great part of the kingdom to herself, to be absolutely independent, to have the liberty of going abroad, or staying in what part of Sweden she thought proper. In short, she expected her successor should make no alteration of her appointments in the government. Charles, who had from the first endeavoured to dissuade Christina from this abdication, but who saw plainly that now she had gone too far to return, refused these conditions, and told her he would not be a mere titular monarch. When Christina heard his answer, she said, she had only made these proposals to find out his real character; that she was now satisfied he was fit to govern, since he knew so well the rights of a king. This extorted compliment from Christina to her successor was, to be sure, very sincere.

To pay his acknowledgments to the queen, Charles had a medal struck on this occasion, with these words, "That he received the crown from God and Christina." This medal offended the states; they said, and very justly, that it was by their election that he ascended the throne.

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We cannot deny, ſince religion teaches us, that the lawful authority of kings is derived from God; but it is the conſent of the people which is the viſible ſign of this lawful authority, and which ſecures the exerciſe of it.

The clergy wanted to oblige Chriſtina to remain in Sweden, for fear ſhe ſhould change her religion; as if this princeſs, after having made a ſacrifice of her crown to her liberty, had not a right to uſe this liberty without controul, and could not go to maſs at Stockholm, without diſturbing the ſtate. But whether it was that ſhe wanted to ſecure herſelf againſt eccleſiaſtical perſecutions, ſo formidable to princes, even when in the height of their power; or whether ſhe then formed the reſolution of ſpending the remainder of her life out of her own country, ſhe took leave of Sweden a few days after her abdication, and had a medal engraved, the device of which was, "Que le Parnaſſe vaut mieux que le "trône." This medal did as little honour to her ſentiments, as the device of it did to her taſte. When ſhe arrived upon the frontiers of Sweden, at a little rivulet which divides that kingdom from Denmark, "At length (ſays ſhe) I am at liberty, and out of "Sweden, where, I hope, never to return." Charles once more made her an offer of his heart and hand; but ſhe told him, that the time was paſt.

Diſguiſed in men's cloaths part of her journey, ſhe travelled over Denmark and Germany; ſcarce ever regarding the diſcourſe which her abdication generally introduced, but diſcovering upon theſe oc-

caſions more philoſophy than ſhe had ſhewn in her reſignation.

The prince of Conde being at Bruſſels when Chriſtina paſſed through, aſked where that queen could be who had ſo eaſily renounced a crown, for which, ſays he, we are ſo eagerly contending and graſping at all our lives, without being able to attain? Her enemies pretended, that ſhe expreſſed ſome regret when ſhe came to Bruſſels, at the ſtep ſhe had taken. The report reached Sweden; and the chancellor Oxenſtiern, then at the point of death, could not help ſaying, "I "foretold ſhe would repent of her conduct; but ſhe "is the daughter of Guſtavus ſtill." Theſe were the laſt words of that great man.

Chriſtina had prepared for the change of her religion, by viſiting all the monaſteries and churches ſhe found in her rout, eſpecially thoſe which contained any remarkable curioſities. In ſhort, after embracing the Roman Catholic religion at Bruſſels, ſhe publickly abjured Lutheraniſm at Inſpruck, and took this device, "Fata "viam invenient." "The fates will direct my courſe."

This action furniſhed matter of great triumph to the Catholics—as if the opinions of this princeſs gave any new weight to the arguments on which the Romiſh religion is founded, and as if it might not be poſſible to embrace even true religion merely from human motives. The Proteſtants, on the other hand, with as little reaſon, fell into deſpair; they pretended indeed that Chriſtina, indifferent to all religions in her heart, had only changed for her convenience, that ſhe might live in Italy at her eaſe, where ſhe had intended

tended to retire, to enjoy the fine arts which that country poſſeſſed. In proof of this indifference, they mention ſome letters or ſome diſcourſes, the truth of which muſt be well atteſted before we can conclude any thing from them. It is aſſerted, for inſtance, that when the Jeſuits of Lorrain once offered her a place near St. Bridget of Sweden, ſhe anſwered, I had rather have a place among the philoſophers. It cannot be denied, and experience too evidently proves, that we ſeldom embrace from conviction any religion in which we have not been educated from our infancy. Intereſt is ſo general a motive for ſuch a change, that even thoſe, who abjure a falſe religion, are hardly ever eſteemed, being always ſuſpected of entertaining leſs noble views than a pure regard to truth.

If Chriſtina became a Catholic only to indulge her curioſity for ſtatues, ſhe did not deſerve to have her own erected; and if ſhe renounced the happineſs of her people for the ſake of pictures, ſhe is more contemptible than the meaneſt of monarchs.

It is certain that, during her reſidence at Rome, ſhe ſhewed a taſte for the works of the great maſters that filled the city. One day, as ſhe was admiring a marble ſtatue of Truth, done by the chevalier Bernini, a cardinal, who was near her, took occaſion to compliment her as a more ſincere lover of truth than princes in general are. "All truths, anſwered ſhe, are not of marble."

The changing of her religion proved fatal to the biſhop John Mathia, a moderate Lutheran, who had projected ſeveral ſchemes for the re-union of the Proteſtant

ſtant churches. The Reformers, who inveigh with ſo much bitterneſs againſt the intolerant ſpirit of the Romiſh church, only hate perſecution when it is againſt them, never when they have occaſion to practiſe it themſelves. Mathia, unjuſtly accuſed of having a ſhare in the ſuppoſed apoſtacy of the queen, was degraded from his biſhoprick by the ſtates of the kingdom.

1656. The queen, who had always entertained an ill opinion of France, changed her mind on a ſudden, from ſome malevolent converſation held of her among her Spaniſh domeſtics. From hence we may ſee, that love and hatred were motives pretty familiar to her. This paſſion for France became ſo violent, that ſhe ſoon formed a reſolution of paying a viſit there, and ſhewing that country, enamoured of monarchy, a queen capable of abandoning a throne for philoſophy.

As ſhe paſſed through the French cities, ſhe ſubmitted to all thoſe harangues which ſovereigns are condemned to receive. Though but juſt admitted into the boſom of the church, Chriſtina, always a princeſs and a woman, could but ill brook the diſcourſe of a certain orator upon the judgments of God and the contempt of the world. At laſt ſhe reached Fontainbleau, and ſurpriſed at the ceremonials of the court, ſhe demanded why the ladies were ſo eager to pay their reſpects to her? "Is it, ſays ſhe, becauſe "I am ſo like a man?"

The celebrated Ninon was the only French woman on whom ſhe beſtowed marks of her particular eſteem. This ſingular perſon, who, by her genius, her manner

ner of thinking, and even her conduct, acted the part of a courtezan with peculiar diſtinction, was more fit than any other woman to attract the notice of a princeſs as ſingular as herſelf. We may commend Ninon for the reception ſhe met with, but we ought not to blame the queen.

From Fontainbleau ſhe went to Paris, where ſhe was univerſally complimented. Here ſhe underwent again thoſe long and diſmal entertainments which were prepared for her, not omitting even the tragedies of the college, which ſhe had the hardineſs to diſpiſe moſt heartily. She revenged herſelf upon them for the fatigue which that parade of ceremonies and reception gave her.

She ſaw at Paris many learned men, received innumerable verſes, and ſet a proper value upon thoſe that had merit. She had long entertained a great regard for the celebrated Menage, who has written ſo many frivolous things, among ſome which are uſeful. In her journey from Sweden to Rome, ſhe wrote to him to come to her at Bruſſels; and, as ſhe met him half way, ſhe expected he would readily perform the reſt of the journey; but Menage did not care to put himſelf out of his way to oblige a queen who was no more. However, ſhe did not reſent this behaviour; on the other hand, as her intention in coming to Paris was to ſeek out men of letters, ſhe appointed him to be her maſter of the ceremonies, to introduce ſtrangers into her preſence; a place which, one may venture to ſay, was never enjoyed before by a learned man, and probably never will again. As it was a kind of ho-

nour to be preſented to the queen, Menage would not ſuffer all, who were deſirous to be admitted to this favour, without diſtinction, but conferred it only on thoſe who were worthy; which made ſome perſons obſerve to the queen, that Menage was a good judge of men of merit.

She had more reaſon to be pleaſed with Paris than with the court which had given her but little entertainment.

The women and courtiers could not reliſh a princeſs who appeared in the habit of a man, who drove flatterers away from her preſence, complimented thoſe that told her agreeable ſtories, and, in ſhort, whoſe genius had ſomething too manly in it for ſuch frivolous beings, with whom all kind of knowledge is abſolutely uſeleſs. Thoſe who thought they knew her, compared her to the caſtle of Fontainbleau, great, but irregular. We ſhall hardly be aſtoniſhed at the indifferent reception ſhe met with, when we recollect the little impreſſion which a perſonage, much ſuperior to Chriſtina, made at the ſame court in 1717, I mean Peter the Great. The generality of the courtiers diſcovered nothing in this monarch but a ſtranger of different manners from their own; they ſaw not the ſovereign ſtored with genius, travelling in queſt of knowledge, and quitting a throne only to render himſelf more worthy of it. Our nation ſeems to have poſſeſſed a great deal of that inferior kind of attention deſcribed by Tacitus, which inveſtigates the reputation of great men in their looks, and is aſtoniſhed when it does not find it.

Chriſtina

1657. Chriſtina had ſuch an attachment to France, that ſhe was hardly got back to Italy, before ſhe thought proper to make a ſecond journey thither, and it was imagined with political views; but this journey was remarkable for nothing but the tragical death of Monaldechi, her maſter of the horſe, whom ſhe cauſed to be aſſaſſinated in the gallery des Cerfs at Fontainbleau, almoſt in her own preſence. The circumſtances of this murder are very well known; but what is not ſo well known, and yet ſeems more ſtrange than the barbarity of Chriſtina, are the diſſertations that were wrote by the learned lawyers to juſtify her. Theſe diſſertations (a lamentable inſtance of the flattery of men of letters to princes) are the reproach of their authors, without being an apology for the fact. I am concerned for the memory of Leibnitz, and for humanity, to find the name of this great man among the defenders of an aſſaſſin. I am yet more ſurpriſed at the inſult he offered to the court of France, in ſaying that, if they were offended by this action of Chriſtina, it was only becauſe they had loſt their regard for her. Poſterity will be aſtoniſhed to find that, in the centre of Europe, and in an enlightened age, it was ſeriouſly debated whether a queen, who had quitted her throne, did not however retain the right of putting her domeſtics to death without any trial? It ſhould rather have been inquired, whether Chriſtina, even upon the throne of Sweden, ſhould have had this barbarous prerogative? a queſtion which would have been ſoon determined at the tribunal of the law of nature and nations.

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The ſtate (whoſe conſtitution ſhould be held ſacred by monarchs, becauſe it remains while kings and ſubjects diſappear) is concerned to ſee every man judged according to the laws: it is the intereſt too of princes, who derive their power and ſecurity from the laws. Humanity ſometimes permits them to ſoften their rigour by pardoning, but never to abuſe them into cruelty. It would be injurious to princes to imagine that theſe principles can offend them, or that it ſhould be thought a mark of courage to aſſert them even in the boſom of a monarchy. They are the voice of nature.—Maxims ſo true and ſo deeply ingraven on the hearts of all men, make it needleſs to ſay before what tribunal Chriſtina, now ſtript of her authority, ought to have ſummoned Monaldechi, whether that of Sweden, of Rome, or of France; it would not have been material at what tribunal, provided it had not been at her own. It ſeems leſs neceſſary to inquire what could be the reaſon of the aſſaſſination of Monaldechi: it may, perhaps, be for the honour of Chriſtina to draw a veil over this myſtery; it would be ſhocking if a love intrigue ſhould have been the cauſe of it, as ſome writers have ſaid; ſuch a motive need not be aſſigned to render her conduct in this reſpect odious.

1657. She was now out of humour with France, where ſhe was looked upon with horror, and wanted to go over to England. Cromwell, who then governed that kingdom with an authority more abſolute than he had puniſhed in Charles I. did not think it convenient to receive her. This man, who was as able a politician as he was a dangerous citizen, was afraid of having his

his affairs expoſed to the piercing eye of a woman who had an intriguing ſpirit; he could not perſuade himſelf to ſee a queen who had ſacrificed three crowns to a religion which he deteſted, and he did not care to employ the public money in ſuch uſeleſs hoſpitality, ſo that Chriſtina was ſoon out of conceit with this expedition, and only went to the French academy, where they had nothing better to preſent to her than a tranſlation by Cotin, of ſome verſes of Lucretius, againſt Providence, to which, ſays Patru, they might oppoſe twenty others, by the ſame author, in favour of Providence. It may not be amiſs to mention, that they likewiſe read to her ſome articles of the dictionary, which the French academy have been employed about ever ſince that time. They happened to fall upon the article Jeu, in which were theſe words, "Jeux de "princes qui ne plaiſent qu'a ceux qui les font."

1658. At length the queen of Sweden returned to Rome, where, in all the ſweetneſs of an elegant repoſe, ſhe indulged her taſte for the arts and ſciences, eſpecially for chemiſtry, medals and ſtatues.

The cardinal Azzolini, who had conceived for the queen an affection, which malice and calumny have not ſpared, re-eſtabliſhed the ſtate of her finances, which had been greatly diſordered by her extravagant profuſeneſs, and by the little punctuality with which her penſion had been remitted to her from Sweden. The cardinal preſerved her confidence and friendſhip till he died; and one may ſay, there were but three perſons in the world, who, in reality, enjoyed her eſteem; the prince of Conde on account of his courage,

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the cardinal De Retz for his ſpirit, and the cardinal Azzolini for his complaiſance. If we may judge by the queen's character, ſhe does not ſeem at any time to have been much actuated by a principle of libertiniſm or of love, as ſome have imagined; miſtaken vanity was her predominant paſſion.

She had not been long at Rome, before a miſunderſtanding happened between her and Alexander VII. who then filled the pontifical chair. This pope, a man of a vain and trifling character, was very deſirous of the honour of the converſion of the princeſs, from whom he had received but a ſingle letter. The part ſhe appeared to take in the intereſts of France, chagrined the pope, who could not endure Lewis XIV. But the queen, who knew the temper of Alexander, and who had certain ends to ſerve by managing him, uſed to pacify him by receiving, from time to time, his benedictions in the public proceſſions. She went ſo far as to lodge in a convent, for fear of giving umbrage to the pope, who did not forget to plant round her a number of monks and eccleſiaſtics as ſpies upon her actions. This retreat into a convent gave occaſion to the report, which was generally believed, that ſhe was going to turn *religious*. "The "queen, ſays Guy Patin, will try every profeſſion in "life, if ſhe does not die ſoon; ſhe has already "played many parts, very different from her firſt "ſituation, ſo that ſhe may be called the tenth muſe, "and the Sybille of the north." It is not eaſy to believe that a princeſs, incenſed againſt the pope, ſhould wiſh to rivet, in ſo ſtrange a manner, theſe bonds which

which increaſed her dependence upon him. However, the cauſes ſhe had, or thought ſhe had, to complain, increaſed ſo much, that, upon the death of Charles Guſtavus, 1660, ſhe had thoughts of returning to Sweden. This journey, the motives of which were unknown, furniſhed many ſpeculations to the politicians, not very agreeable; for Chriſtina's ancient ſubjects, having forgot all ſhe had done for them, and all the affection they had formerly expreſſed, now beheld her only as a woman who had quitted them for the ſake of going to live in a ſtrange land, in the profeſſion of a religion which they looked upon with deteſtation in Sweden. The maſs, which ſhe cauſed to be read without any reſtraint in the palace, gave very little uneaſineſs to the nobility, whoſe attention was fully occupied with war and intrigue. But two orders of the kingdom were highly diſpleaſed; the clergy, whoſe authority ſhe had inſulted, and the peaſants, whoſe prejudices ſhe had ſhocked. Theſe two orders refuſed to confirm her revenues, being perſuaded that nobody deſerved to live who did not believe in Luther. It ſignified nothing to ſay that, as a ſovereign, ſhe was not reſponſible for her actions to any perſon. The anſwer was very ready, that ſhe was no longer their miſtreſs to annul the fundamental conſtitutions of the kingdom. The ſtates ordered her chapel to be pulled down, and baniſhed the Italian almoners who accompanied her. She was no longer a queen except in name, ſays an hiſtorian; and he whom ſhe had made king, and who boaſted of holding every thing of God and Chriſtina, was no more.

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She seemed to have intended a revenge for this persecution, if she had succeeded in her project of ascending the throne again; but this design produced only a second renunciation, to which she was forced to submit. She then returned to Rome: in her way through Hamburgh, she called upon the celebrated Lambecius, whom she consoled under the persecutions he suffered from the Protestant divines, by the honour she shewed him. These persecutions induced him to profess himself a Catholic, to justify himself from the charge of Atheism, which his enemies urged against him: that is, he changed his religion, to prove that he had one to change.

The siege of Candia, of which the princes of Christendom were mere spectators, without giving it any relief, was by no means an object of indifference to the queen of Sweden. She exerted herself to procure assistance for the Venetians both in money and troops. These efforts, though fruitless, were so great, as to give occasion to some to suspect her of being influenced by interest; so ready is the malignity of human nature; to poison the most commendable actions without any foundation.

1662. A little time after happened the famous affair of the guards, in which the king of France obtained a satisfaction so mortifying to the court of Rome. Christina had the honour to intercede with the king for a pope whom she hated, and the pleasure, at the same time, to intercede without effect. The pope, who was vexed at being indebted to her for the king's indulgence, and who perhaps had penetrated into her motives,

motives, imagined himſelf releaſed from all obligation when ſhe did not ſucceed: at laſt, being quite wearied out with abſolutions and affronts from the pontiff, ſhe formed a ſerious reſolution of returning to Sweden again. While ſhe was ſounding the ſtates of the kingdom upon this meaſure, ſhe filled up her time at Rome with the converſation of men of letters, and often diverted herſelf at their expence. Among other things, ſhe cauſed a medal to be ſtruck for the ſake of laughing at the embarraſſments which the legend occaſioned them. I know not whether ſuch ſort of diverſion is to be commended. A prince, whoſe intereſt it is in particular to be a patron and lover of letters, ought to be the laſt perſon in the world to turn into ridicule thoſe who cultivate them. It is a thing which he ought to leave to themſelves, and it is what they are unfortunately but too apt to ſucceed in.

The conditions which the ſenate annexed to her reſidence in Sweden, even when ſhe had ſet out upon her ſecond journey, were ſo hard, that ſhe thought it adviſeable to ſtop at Hamburgh, and wait for the next diet to ſettle her demands.

It was then ſhe wrote to the ſenator Sevedt Baar, charged with her affairs at the court of Sweden, that the obligation ſhe had been under to manage concerns of great importance, had taught her to ſuffer and to diſſemble. It was in the ſame journey that, having found in the cabinet of an antiquary, a medal of her abdication, ſhe threw it aſide, and would not look at it. This action, which perhaps might proceed from

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real chagrin, was regarded with ſome probability as a ſtrong expreſſion of the indignation ſhe felt at having reſigned the crown.

The diet was held, and it ſeems the intereſts of God were quite altered, for of all orders of the ſtate the clergy were the only perſons inclined to eſpouſe her cauſe. But the reſt of the nation, who had conceived but little regard for Chriſtina from her paſt rambles, and who ſaw in her conduct a great deal of inconſtancy and intrigue, exerted the right ſhe had given them, and refuſed almoſt all her demands. She then renounced Sweden for ever, and returned to Rome, where ſhe ſpent the remainder of her days diſcontented, and ill paid by her antient ſubjects, forgotten by France, and little regarded by that nation which ſhe had preferred to all others. Gratitude and admiration were the firſt ſentiments of the Romans to a princeſs who had refuſed to reign in order to live among them; but thoſe men have not a laſting ſentiment for any thing but grandeur and power.

Even princes that are the moſt eſteemed, and the moſt worthy of being ſo, are not ſufficiently appriſed how neceſſary a throne is to do juſtice to their talents; and in the eyes of the people, that is, of all mankind, they derive a merit from their crown, even when they have the leaſt need of it. "Chriſtina, ſaid the hiſ-"torian Nani, perceived, ſoon after her abdication, "that a queen without a ſtate, is like a deity without "a temple, whoſe worſhip will be ſoon abandoned."

She was not yet arrived at Rome, when ſhe heard of the death of Alexander VII. The following circumſtance

cumſtance will enable us to form ſome idea of the character of this pope. In the beginning of his pontificate, he had ſhewn great ſeverity and averſion to what is called at Rome, Nepotiſm. His diſintereſted conduct, in this reſpect, was the ſubject of a letter, which cardinal Pallavicini had addreſſed to him, in the introduction of his hiſtory of the council of Trent. But the pope, on a ſudden, thought better of the matter, and ſo over-ran Rome with his nephews, that Pallavicini perceiving the ridicule of the letter, ſuppreſſed the publication of it, though it was already printed.

1667—1669. Alexander VII. was ſucceeded by Clement IX. whoſe too ſhort pontificate was called the golden age of Rome. Munificent, noble, the friend of learning and of man, he had the wiſdom to make religion reſpectable, by putting an end to vain diſputations; his pacific diſpoſition deſerves more imitation.

Chriſtina kept up a conſtant correſpondence with the learned men of Rome, and with foreigners.—The author of the memoirs has given us a liſt of the learned, who then compoſed the Arcadian academy, as ſorry a one as that which he gives us of the learned men of Sweden in the reign of Chriſtina.

We will only cite from this part of the memoirs, the title of a work of Nicholas Pallavicini; "A vindi-"cation of Divine Providence, in the great acquiſi-"tion made by the Catholic church, in the perſon of "the queen of Sweden." This treatiſe was not publiſhed

liſhed, becauſe there were fifty-four hereſies found in it.—Commend me to the patience of thoſe that counted them.—

It is obſervable, from a letter which Chriſtina wrote about this time to Otto de Guericke, how violently they were prejudiced at Rome, againſt the notion of the earth's moving. This princeſs, who had renounced her throne for the ſake of being free, had not yet the courage to confeſs to a foreigner, that ſhe believed the ſun did not move.

1672. Soon after this, the famous war was begun which Lewis XIV. maintained with ſuch glory againſt all Europe, whoſe jealouſy was rouſed by his humiliation of the Dutch. It was concluded by the treaty of Nimeguen. Chriſtina did not approve of the Swedes entering into this war; in which, indeed, they had ill ſucceſs. Perhaps it was from her reſentment of a libel juſt publiſhed againſt her in France, and for which ſhe could obtain no ſatisfaction. But what had moſt weight with her, was the apprehenſion that they would delay the payment of her ſubſidy. She ſent a plenipotentiary to take care of her intereſt at Nimeguen, who was received and treated as the ambaſſador of a queen of no conſideration. This plenipotentiary was a young Swede, whoſe name was Cedercrantz; the want of genius and knowledge, which Chriſtina had obſerved in him, did not prevent her truſting him with the conduct of her affairs; ſhe ſaid, it belonged to her to beſtow not only ſucceſs, but underſtanding, on thoſe that ſerved her. The

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Swede, however, did procure the remittance of considerable sums of money soon after the conclusion of the peace; but Christina absolutely refused the proposal that was made of receiving her debt by certain annual payments from France.

1679. The following year, the opinions of the Quietists, more mortifying to human reason than those which have disturbed France in these latter times, made a great noise at Rome, where these kinds of disputes are really held in contempt, but treated with great solemnity in appearance. The author of this new system was Michael Molinos, a Spanish priest, grand director, and a worthy man even in the opinion of the pope; two titles sufficient to make him enemies enough. Those who had the government of consciences, would needs see dangerous heresies in a man, whose ideas about spirituality deserved rather pity than indignation.

Christina, whether from natural compassion or from her dislike of the persecutors of Molinos, or whether, in short, from her desire of making some figure in an affair which engaged the attention of all Christendom, took the part of Molinos so zealously, that she was even suspected of favouring his opinions; and they almost thought it criminal in this princess to pay the duties of humanity to an unfortunate man. The spiritual repose, which Molinos preached, and which then entirely employed the attention of the holy office, made Pasquin say pleasantly, "If we "speak, we go to the gallies; if we write, to the "gibbet;

" gibbet; if we keep ourſelves quiet, to the inqui-
" ſition. What is to be done, then?"

Molinos, though ſupported by Chriſtina, found a formidable adverſary in the king of France, who, being inſtigated by the enemies of this harmleſs heretic, vigorouſly proſecuted his condemnation at Rome. It was at length pronounced by pope Innocent XI. who then filled the holy ſee. And independent of the equity with which he acted on this occaſion, it is but juſtice to him to ſay, that no conſideration of intereſt could influence his conduct. It plainly appears through the whole of his tranſactions with France, that he acted upon no temporiſing plan; virtuous, opinionative, and of limited views, he behaved with an inflexibility, which, under a king leſs pious than Lewis XIV. might have cauſed a ſchiſm between the churches of France and Rome. His ſucceſſors obtained much more by their ductility, than he could by an ill-tim'd firmneſs. And 'tis ſomewhat remarkable, that the court of France, notwithſtanding its attachment to the holy ſee, has been the moſt dexterous in managing the popes to their own advantage.

The celebrated mademoiſelle le Fever, ſince madame Dacier, ſent, about this time, to Chriſtina, Florus, in uſum, &c. which ſhe had juſt publiſhed. The queen thanked her, and adviſed her to make herſelf a Catholic.—Mademoiſelle le Fever, ſome time after, made uſe of this advice.

I know not whether one ſhould mention another letter, which our author has inſerted, and in which

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the queen of Sweden exhorts one count Vaſſanau to turn monk. The compiler makes uſe of this letter to prove the religious ſentiments of the queen; tho' in many parts of his book, he intimates his ſuſpicions of the ſincerity of her converſion. This problem appeared to him very difficult to reſolve; and ſeems to have given him great diſturbance. But a letter ſo unworthy of the princeſs, and of the perſon to whom it was wrote, ſerves only to ſhew that Chriſtina miſſpent her time. The author ſhould not have publiſhed it.

The ſame may be ſaid of the apology for Chriſtina, upon her affected paſſion for aſtrology. In an age, when philoſophy (which ſeldom diſturbs crowned heads) had not made a general progreſs, it is not to be wondered at that the queen, wanting to know more than was poſſible, ſhould be prejudiced in favour of a ſcience, to which, frivolous as it was, ſome conſiderable men had applied themſelves; and which had employed, in his younger days, the celebrated Caſſini. Chriſtina, however, ſhewed ſome diſcernment and knowledge of the world, when ſhe obſerved that the terreſtial aſtrology ſeemed to her a better guide in diſcovering events, than the celeſtial; and that aſtrology, like medicine, muſt be ſtudied, only that we may not be dupes to it.

As a queen, as a Catholic, as an enthuſiaſtic admirer of great actions, this princeſs, in 1683, wrote a letter to John Sobieſki, king of Poland, who, by relieving Vienna, then beſieged by the Turks, and abandoned by Leopald, both ſerved and humbled the

emperor. Chriſtina, in this letter, acquainted Sobieſki with his being reproached for converting, improperly, the ſpoils of the war to his own uſe. "I "envy not your majeſty (ſays ſhe) the treaſures you "have got; I envy you only the glorious title you "have acquired, of the deliverer of Chriſtendom; "and though I am without a kingdom, I think my-"ſelf under that obligation that is due to you from "all monarchs."

Lewis XIV. who, while he was humbling the pope on one hand, thought, on the other, to extirpate Calviniſm from his kingdom, in 1685, publiſhed the famous edict, revoking that of Nantz. Chriſtina wrote, on this occaſion, to the chevalier de Terlon the French ambaſſador in Sweden, a letter, which Bayle has preſerved in his journal. She there laments the fortune of the perſecuted Calviniſts, with that warmth and ſincerity, that made them ſay, that the queen's letter was the relics of Proteſtantiſm. This is, however, very doubtful; and there is all the appearance, that the rights of humanity alone drew this letter from her. The perſecution of the Reformed was carried to a degree of cruelty, which one cannot impute to Lewis XIV. It was the effect of violent animoſities amongſt his miniſtry. I don't enter at all into the queſtion, whether the king ſhould have tolerated Calviniſm in his kingdom? whether two powerful and rival ſects of religion are more dangerous in a kingdom, than the violent extirpation of one of them? or whether in a country of commerce, it would not have been better to have employed

ployed mildneſs than open force, and gradually, and by gentle methods, made proſelytes to the Catholic faith, than martyrs to Calviniſm? Theſe political and religious queſtions require a different pen from mine, and another ſtyle than this. All the world, however, agrees, at this day, that the cruelty of this perſecution equally ſhocked religion and juſtice. Should we acknowledge the rectitude of the king's intentions, we can't help lamenting, that they were ſo barbarouſly executed.

The ſentiments which Chriſtina diſcovers in this letter, do her honour, and are one of the beſt memorials that remain of her. "Are you thoroughly ſatisfied (ſays ſhe to the chevalier de Terlon) of the "ſincerity of theſe new converts?—Military folks "are ſtrange apoſtles—I am grieved to ſee ſo many "honeſt men reduced to beggary—If they are in an "error, they rather deſerve pity than hatred—"France ſeems, to me, in a malady, to which ſhe "applies a violent remedy, when patience and gentle "treatment would have wrought the cure." She concludes this letter, by oppoſing the conduct of Lewis XIV. to his Proteſtant ſubjects, to his conduct towards the pope.

This laſt article is too long, as well as her tranſalpine declamations againſt the rights of the Gallican church, and the famous articles of 1682.

Chriſtina was very much offended at Bayle for publiſhing this letter; and more ſo on account of the reflections which he has added, and which throw ſome doubt upon her converſion. Theſe complaints were

the ſubject of a long altercation between the philoſopher and the queen; which ended, however, to the mutual ſatisfaction of both parties.

1687. The affair of privileges, which then made a great noiſe in France, made no leſs diſturbance at Rome. Chriſtina, who had juſt given up her right, wanted to recal it, from her indignation at the inſolence of the pope's officers, who had purſued and taken a criminal, even in her houſe. But this affair, which was treated at Paris with great parade, and which produced excommunications from the pope, and from the parliament arrets, and appeals to a general council, was managed more ſmoothly between the pope and the queen, by the mediation of their confeſſors. Nevertheleſs Chriſtina was as difficult to pleaſe, as if ſhe had really been formidable.

The prince of Conde had died the preceding year. Chriſtina, whoſe admiration of him was not abated by his diſgrace, wrote to mademoiſelle de Scudery, to engage her to celebrate a hero ſo worthy of elogium. She appears, in this letter, to contemplate her own end with great calmneſs; "The approach of death "(ſays ſhe) which is haſtening on, gives me no diſ- "quietude: I wait for it, without wiſhing or fearing "it."

1688. War, in the mean time, commenced again in Europe. It is obſervable, by one of the laſt letters of Chriſtina, that ſhe foreſaw what would be the event of it, with regard to king James II. This prince, who makes a better figure in a funeral oration than he does in hiſtory, and whoſe perſecuting temper will

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always be offenſive to the true genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity, had been driven from his throne for tormenting a nation that never diſturbed him with his monks and his miſtreſſes, and for attempting to make the Engliſh believe by force what he ſhould have taught them by his own example. A refugee in France, little reſpected in Europe, and a ſubject of raillery even in the court he had fled to, they pretend he wrought miracles after his death, though he had not ſkill enough to manage the miracle of recovering his throne while he was alive.

Always averſe to France, Chriſtina ſeemed to wiſh that the Swedes would not have joined Lewis XIV. in this war. They pretend too, that ſhe was weary of the pope and the Romans, and was concerting meaſures with the elector of Brandenburg to retreat into his dominions. Some writers, without examining whether there really was any negotiation for this purpoſe, have concluded, that ſhe had thoughts of returning to the Lutheran religion.

1689. But if ſhe had indeed any ſuch deſign, which is not probable, ſhe had not, however, time to put it in execution. She died a little while after, with great compoſure and philoſophy. They ſay, her death was ſuperior to that of Elizabeth; one could wiſh to ſay as much for her life. She ordered, by her will, that theſe words only ſhould be put upon her tomb; "D. O. M. Vixit Chriſtina, Ann. LXIII." The modeſty and the oſtentation of monumental inſcriptions are equally the effect of vanity. Modeſty agrees beſt with that ſpecies of vanity which has

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produced ſome great actions; parade with that vanity which has only ſignalized itſelf in trifles. If we examine the epitaph of Chriſtina by this rule—the irregularities of her conduct, of her temper and her taſte—the want of decency ſhe ſhewed in her behaviour—the little uſe ſhe made of her knowledge and underſtanding towards the happineſs of mankind—her pride, which was often miſplaced (and which is always ſo when it does not produce reſpect), —her equivocal diſcourſe upon the religion ſhe had renounced, and that which ſhe had embraced; in fine, the vagrant life which ſhe led among ſtrangers who did not love her: all theſe circumſtances together juſtify more than ſhe was aware of, the brevity of her epitaph.

I ſhall ſay nothing of her obſequies, her library, her pictures, or the medals that were ſtruck on this occaſion: I leave it to the author of the Memoirs to amuſe himſelf with this detail, chuſing rather to take notice of two pieces which ſhe compoſed; one intitled, "Penſées diverſes," which, like moſt things of this kind, is but a collection of common-place obſervations, and thoſe frequently where there have not been even the pains taken to diſguiſe them by an epigrammatic turn.

But, what is moſt remarkable in this performance, are the maxims upon toleration, which diametrically oppoſe the propoſitions in ſupport of the infallibility of the pope. If ſhe meant to lay down theſe maxims by way of counterpoiſe to the others, I doubt we muſt be forced to ſay, that the remedy is worſe than the diſeaſe.

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The other performance of Chriſtina is an elogium upon Alexander, that conqueror who is the idol of antiquity, and the ſubject of criticiſm in our days; who, like moſt celebrated princes, neither deſerves the praiſes which adulation has beſtowed on him, nor the cenſure with which he has been treated by learned men, becauſe they had no intereſt in commending him. Chriſtina ſhould have praiſed him leſs, and imitated him more, not in his extravagant love of fame and conqueſt, but in the dignity of his mind, in his talents for government, in his knowledge of mankind, in the enlargement of his views, and in his refined taſte for the arts and ſciences.

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